

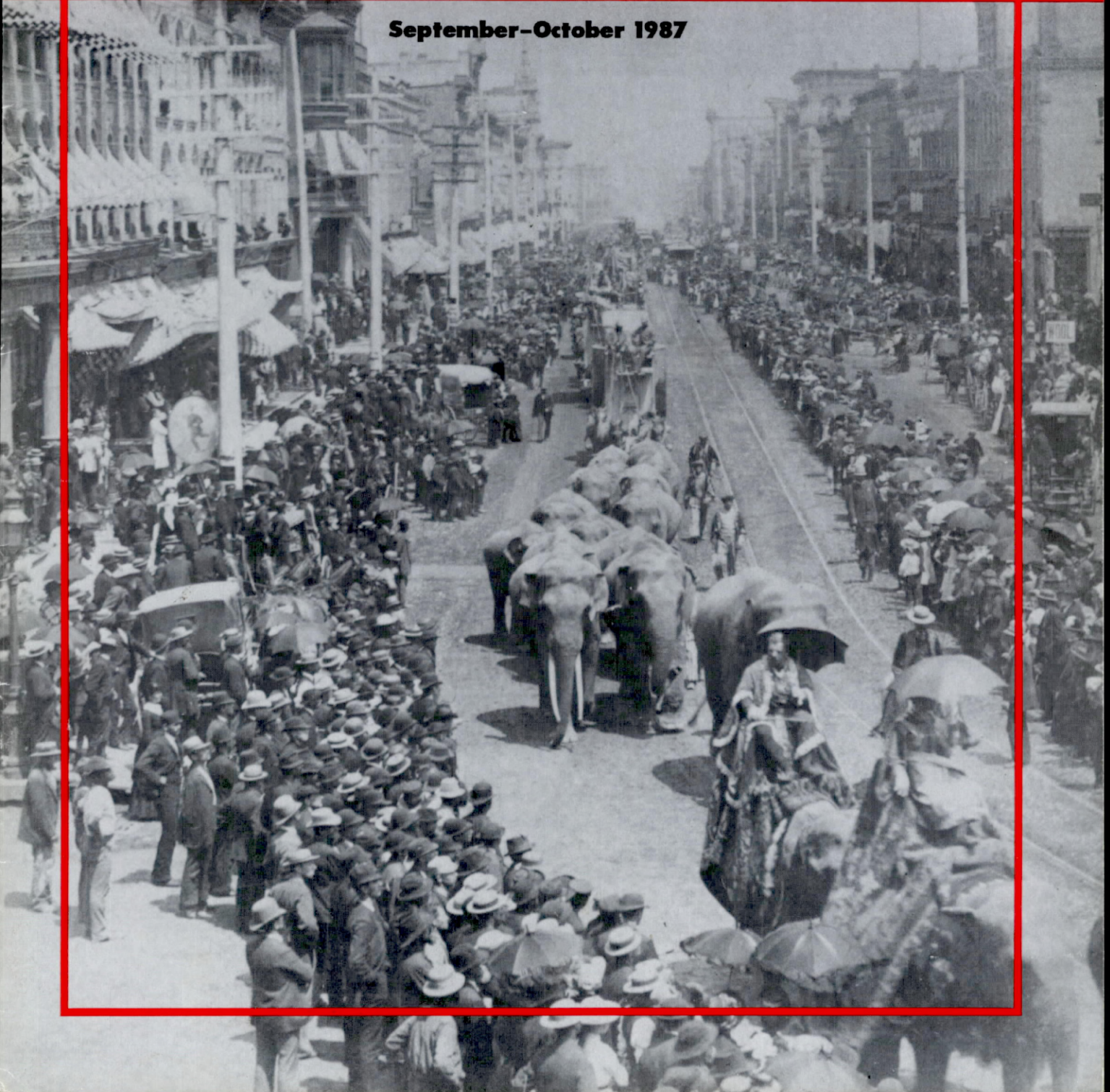
H-40 1917

**Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season of 1917**

# BANDWAGON

**The Journal of the Circus Historical Society**

**September-October 1987**







THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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#### THIS MONTH'S COVER

A century ago the circus had a much bigger impact on American life than it does today as this rare cabinet photo of the Great Forepaugh Show's parade in Grand Rapids, Michigan from the mid or late 1880s attests. The giraffe den can barely be seen following the the elephants in the march. Original picture from John F. Polacsek collection.

#### THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

One thing I have learned during my tenure as President is that a number of others share my love of the circus and its

history. Such an individual was Lloyd Jeffords of Chillicothe, Ohio who passed away on July 26 of this year, only days after joining the Circus Historical Society. His family requested that a donation in his name be made to the CHS in lieu of sending flowers. Our organization received \$125.00 as a result of this wonderful gesture. We extend both our sympathy and gratitude to his wife Catharine M. Jeffords. Fred Pfening III

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#### NEW OFFICERS AT CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

At their September 21 meeting the Historic Sites Foundation, the governing body of the Circus World Museum, elected new officers. They are: Fred D. Pfening III, President; State

Senator Fred A. Risser, Vice President; James Kieffer, Treasurer; and Sarah Kimball, Secretary. Pfening, Kieffer, and Kimball are all members of the CHS as are outgoing Foundation President Paul Ingrassia and board member C. P. Fox.

During his years as President Paul Ingrassia led the Circus World Museum to great growth and additional stature. He will continue to serve on the board.

#### CHRISTMAS ISSUE ADVERTISING

The November-December issue of *Bandwagon* will be unusually large this year. This super size issue is possible because of advertising purchased by circuses and by CHS members wishing to extend Christmas greetings.

You can show your appreciation for the *Bandwagon* by taking an ad in this issue. A full page ad is \$85; a half page is \$45; and a quarter page is \$25. Please send your ad copy and payment to the editor by December 1, 1987.

#### CHS ELECTION UPCOMING

CHS President Fred D. Pfening III has appointed John Polacsek election commissioner. If you wish to nominate a member as a national officer or director, please mail the nomination

before November 15 to Polacsek at 5980 Lannoo, Detroit, Michigan 48236. Directors can be nominated by members from that Division, and any member of the organization can be nominated for the three national offices. Fred D. Pfening III, President; Greg Parkinson, Vice President and Johann Dahlinger, Secretary-Treasurer have all expressed a willingness to serve a second term.

A ballot will be enclosed with the November-December *Bandwagon*, and the new officers will begin their terms on January 1, 1988.



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#### BRITISH CIRCUSIANA FOR SALE

- 4 Chipperfield Circus English A. T. V. Roller Captions 84" x 12"
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- 1 Noah's Ark (Chipperfield Circus) 10" x 30" Caption

All of above are early 1950s and are the originals used for telecast, no other exist.

1 Poster Astley's, not dated, First appearance of Mr. Batty, perhaps 1843?

I have several other items.

Mrs. W. W. Dredge  
P. O. Box 777  
Patagonia, AZ 85624  
(Phone 602-455-5715)



# Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus

## Season of 1917

By Gordon M. Carver and Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

The 1916 season had been an outstanding success for the Hagenbeck-Wallace show. It had traveled on 59 cars. Only the Barnum & Bailey and Ringling shows were larger, and the next largest circus was the Sells-Floto show, using 42 cars. For the 1917 tour the Hagenbeck show would use two less cars, but the Sells-Floto show added a car.

Owner Ed Ballard reassessed his organization as he made plans for the 1917 season. The war in Europe was causing concerns and problems for circus owners in the United States. An article appeared in the March 28, 1917 issue of the *New York Clipper* under the headline "Circuses are worried over war." The article expressed concern about fear of commandeering of stock. The article read: "With the gathering of war clouds in the United States, circus and carnival men frankly admit that they are worried concerning the outlook for the outdoor season which is about to start. If the war should assume big proportions it would undoubtedly cripple the circus business to a serious extent, if it does not tie it up altogether."

"The shipment of live stock to the Allies during the past three years has made horses very valuable. If this country should throw her unqualified support to the Allies, there will be even a greater demand for all the live stock available. It is known that circus men possess the best live stock obtainable and, in the event of this country facing actual hostilities, the live stock of the outdoor showmen would, in all probability, be commandeered by the federal government."

"Another problem that would face circuses in the event of war would be that of transportation. The rolling stock of

circuses might be taken over by the government, which would mean a complete paralysis in the circus world.

"The engines and engineers which are rented to circuses by the railroad would, also, probably be among the first to do federal service in transporting troops and supplies, so that even if the

further about the show appeared in any of the show world publications until the middle of March.

The next news came in mid-March when it was reported that the winter quarters had been busy in recent weeks. Many show people were in West Baden rehearsing or preparing new acts for the



**The entrance banner of the 1917 side show was titled "Carl Hagenbeck's Wonder Zoo, Vaudeville Minstrels and Congress of Novelties." All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.**

circus rolling stock should not be commandeered, it might still be an impossibility to move it."

Early news of the 1917 Carl Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus came at the end of January when it was announced the general manager R. M. Harvey spent most of the second week of January in New York City. He was to care for several business matters for the show, including contacting various animal importers concerning possible purchases. Beyond this sketchy notice nothing

coming season. The Cottrell-Powell troupe was breaking a new bareback horse; Emil Schwyer was working his lions daily to keep them in shape. Mrs. Sanger was practicing a new bicycle act and Mr. Sanger was training pigs for his act. Emma Donovan and her wardrobe crew were working on new costumes for a patriotic spec, which was to be a feature in the performance. Ballard had purchased forty ponies. Waxie Olsen had completed harness for the ponies, as well as for Mr. Sanger's thirty-six pigs.

Fred Seymour, who had the cookhouse, was building new gasoline ranges, an improvement over the old style wood and charcoal ranges. Although the new ranges could be dangerous they provided much quicker heat for cooking breakfast.



Blackie Williams, superintendent of properties, was in quarters getting his equipment in shape. It was also announced that two new trunk wagons had been constructed and looked beautiful. Finally, Wild Horse Mike, who was to be the "Big Chief" of the wild west after show, had arrived in quarters. Obviously the West Baden winter quarters was a busy place in early 1917.

A significant addition to the staff was Capt. Bill Curtis as general superintendent. Curtis, a master builder, brought great ability to the Hagenbeck show following a number of years with Sells-Floto. Over the years Curtis had introduced a number of mechanical advances to the circus business, one of which was the canvas spool wagon he designed and built for the Floto show in 1910. The first model was hand powered, but it was later reworked using a gasoline powered engine. Soon after arriving in quarters Curtis began building canvas spool wagons for Hagenbeck-Wallace. No photos have been located showing canvas spools on the show in 1917, however Curtis was quoted many years later as saying he installed a canvas spool on the show that year. A 1918 inventory lists three canvas spool wagons which more than likely were built for the 1917 season.

Ed Ballard was short in some departments due to the war situation. Without a boss of the light department he requested help from John Ringling. A letter in the Pfening Archives to Ringling prior to the opening of the season thanks him for loaning an experienced electrical man to get that department in order for the new tour. In the letter Ballard assured Ringling that the man would be sent back as soon as he had readied the electrical equipment for the road.

A problem facing the lithographing companies was the prompt delivery of paper to circuses. Dated paper had to arrive in time to meet the bill car. The advance car managers had to worry about



**Bill Curtis built canvas spool wagons for the Hagenbeck show after he arrived in the spring of 1917.**

having adequate ingredients for making paste, some of which were in short supply. The conditions of the coming war were having their effect on circuses.

An article in *Billboard* later reported that the center poles for all the Hagenbeck tents had been refurbished and painted and were in fine condition for the coming season. This is an interesting comment for not all shows includ-

**Ed Ballard and his son were featured on the cover of the 1917 courier. The single Hagenbeck name was used throughout the sixteen pages.**



ing Ringling Bros. painted their poles in this era. The article also noted that a new dog wagon had been built.

The animals ordered by R. M. Harvey arrived from New York. Included in the shipment were llamas, ostriches, wild boars and white deer. A show official ad-

vised that these additions would greatly enhance the menagerie display. While the menagerie seemed to be in good shape, only a week before the opening the show was still advertising for "a few more freaks" for the side show. They also indicated that the picture privilege, "which was unsurpassed," was still available. This was men on the midway with simple cameras mounted on tripods that took "instant" 3 x 4 pictures, for about 50 cents each. Similar to today's Polaroids, the exposures were developed in a small light proof black box under the tripod. The photographs tended to fade eventually but before the days of the universality of the Kodak they were a popular concession at amusement locations.

In spite of the shortage of manpower and supplies the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was prepared to open the season. The advance advertising cars moved out for the opening stand in Indianapolis on April 18. The No. 1 car was managed by J. C. Donahue and carried 23 men. Press agent Bernie Head traveled with the car. Floyd King was general press agent and laid out the press books and advertising for the 1917 season. The newspaper ads were revised, dropping the word "Carl" from the title. During the 1916 season Ballard had often called the show Carl Hagenbeck, not using the Wallace part of the title. Carl Hagenbeck was used on the printed program in





1916. During the 1916 season the Wallace name was included in most of the newspaper ads. A few of the older ads continued to read Carl Hagenbeck-Wallace, but most of the 1917 ads referred to the "Carl Hagenbeck Zoological Paradise" as a feature, claiming it to be the "biggest zoo on earth." Three rings and two stages and six arenas, were advertised in the new ads.

It appears that Ballard could not make up his mind exactly which title to use. A third variation appears on the cover of the sixteen page courier used during the 1917 season. The name on the booklet, called "Illustrated Review," was Hagenbeck Circus, no Carl, no Wallace. Featured prominently on the cover was a photograph of Ballard holding his baby son Charles Edward. A photo inside showed an elephant coming out of a rail car, the title on the car had been re-touched to read "The Hagenbeck." The center spread had a large group photo of the show personnel, above which read Carl Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. A page of photos of wild animal trainer Emil Schwyer mentioned him as being with Carl Hagenbeck's Circus. Other pages of the courier featured photos of the Ward,

**The No. 1 advance advertising car is shown in Dallas, Texas in 1917.**

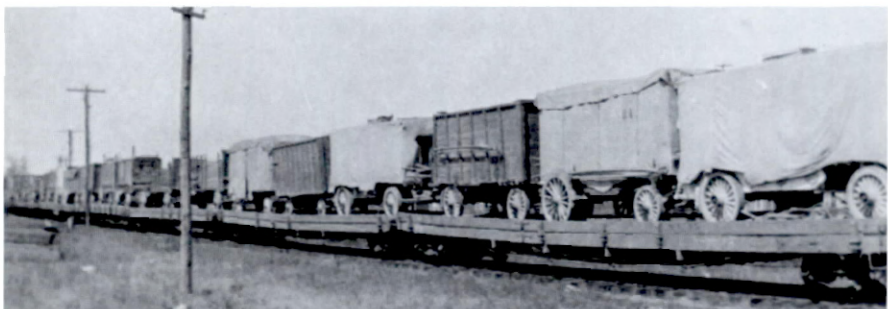
Darras, Alvarez, Nanking, LaFleur and Dierick acts.

The show pulled out of quarters on Tuesday, April 18, for the first run into Indianapolis, Indiana. The opening stand was really a rehearsal to prepare for the real opener at Cincinnati. Two more preparatory stands followed at New Castle, Indiana and Hamilton, Ohio.

In Indianapolis the show had perfect weather with a two thirds afternoon and a sell out at night. In Hamilton they felt the first opposition of the season as the John Robinson Circus followed there a week later.

Then came what the show considered its real opener, a two day stand in Cincinnati, Saturday and Monday, April 21 and 23. The show played two different

**A group of loaded fifty foot flat cars is shown in Hattiesburg, Mississippi during the 1917 season. W.H.B. Jones photo.**



locations, the first on a lot in the Cumminsville section of the city and the second, two days later, in the suburb of Norwood. This meant a teardown Saturday night after the show in Cumminsville, loading the trains, making only a seven mile run, unloading Sunday morning and setting up in Norwood. It is difficult to understand the reasoning behind this move. It would seem that it would have been more economical to pull the wagons the distance between the two lots. Cincinnati was the only city of seven visited for more than one day where such a split stand was used. One other aspect of the Queen City stand was that the Robinson show was again in a week later on April 30 and May 1. The Robinson circus played both days on a single lot. The Barnum & Bailey Circus also came to Cincinnati six weeks later, but they posed no threat.

Following Cincinnati the show moved to Middletown, followed by Dayton, Marion, Columbus and Lancaster.

The show was the first one of the season and broke in a new lot in Columbus, located near the downtown area, making a fairly short distance for the parade to get downtown. The train was unloaded two miles away in the Hocking Valley yards near the Ohio State Penitentiary.

The day before the show appeared in Columbus an article appeared in the Columbus *Monitor* that spoke to the concerns of becoming involved in the war in Europe. It read, "Red Cross workers will vie with the dispensers of pink lemonade at the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus Friday. Red Cross campaigners will be given free access to the main and side shows. Mayor Karb will make an address at the afternoon performance on the work of the Red Cross. A group of wives of well known Columbus businessmen will have charge of the recruiting booths on the grounds."

An article in the Columbus *Dispatch* appeared the afternoon of April 27, the day the show was in town, which was headlined, "Street parade at noon one of the largest circus pageants seen here in many years." The article read, "While the greater part of Columbus was wrapped in slumber Friday morning three long trains of yellow cars bearing the great Hagenbeck-Wallace shows,



**1 DAY ONLY COLUMBUS, FRIDAY, APRIL 27**  
AT MUNICIPAL CIRCUS GROUNDS

**HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS**

**THE WONDER SHOW**  
THE LIKE OF WHICH YOU NEVER SAW BEFORE

**All New Again! All Right Again!**

A CIRCUS GATHERED FROM 18 NATIONS  
USED FOR CAPITAL INVESTED  
125,000 \$3,000,000

**6 ARENAS**

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YOU HAVE NEVER WITNESSED A CIRCUS LIKE THIS

60 RIDERS—40  
60 AERIALISTS—40  
50 CLOWNS—40  
100 ACTS—100

Two performances daily, 2 and 8 p. m. Doors open one hour earlier. One 50c ticket admits to everything. Children under 10 years 25c. Girls, Gildes, Million-Dollar Street Parade 10 a. m., preceding first performance.

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Performing in a massive steel-floated arena. The Wide World, Civilized and Uncivilized, Ransomed to Adventure and complete what is now the **BIGGEST ZOO ON EARTH**

**THE GREAT WALLACE CIRCUS DE LUXE**

**50 CLOWNS 50**  
INCLUDING PIRO THE KINGS JESTER

Reserved and Admission/Tickets on sale circus day at Wendt-Bristol Drug Co., 47 S. High St., at same prices as charged on show grounds.

Newspaper ad used for the April 27, 1917 stand of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in Columbus, Ohio.

one of the largest circus organizations in the world, pulled into the Hocking Valley freight yards from Marion. Before 7 o'clock the last of the cars had been unloaded and the paraphernalia and equipment was enroute to the new municipal circus grounds, Sullivant Avenue and Skidmore Street.

"The Hagenbeck-Wallace parade was one of the largest circus pageants seen here in many years. It was participated in by over 1,000 men and women, 180 horses, three herds of elephants, a caravan of camels and innumerable numbers of led animals. There were eight trumpeting bands and two calliopes. There were nearly three score carved and gilded allegorical floats and tableau wagons, in addition to many cages and dens containing the Hagenbeck collection of wild animals."

Another short article appeared in the paper the following day. It read, "In spite of the rain and the cold the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus played to fair sized afternoon and evening audiences Friday. Columbus is quite inured to going to the circus on cold and wet days and the real circus fans would not be deterred." Another article that day reported that few thefts had been reported by visitors to

the circus. Despite the large crowd Friday night, only three robberies occurred, according to police records. Quite a commotion was caused on the circus grounds when police officers arrested M. R. Barnett, a local man, after he had robbed another man of \$11. While police were walking Barnett from the circus grounds a crowd collected and someone struck Barnett over the head from the rear and escaped. Barnett suffered a large gash in his head. Police believed that a pal of Barnett's intended the blow for them. Circus employees reported that Barnett was wanted in Marion for pocket-picking. Two other men reported having their pockets picked. During this period it was not unusual for shady characters to follow circuses from city to city so they could work the large crowds.

The *Columbus Citizen* also ran a short afternotice. It read, "The municipal circus lot may be alright in dry weather. But it rained Friday when the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus initiated it, and the circus folk didn't spread any straw on the approaches. Hence the good-sized crowds that witnessed the afternoon and evening performances took home muddy shoes as souvenirs. The circus itself, tho still in early season form, generally pleased. There were all sorts of trained animals from geese and pigs to lions and tigers. Notable acts were given by the Dierick brothers, who supported a bridge while elephants walked across, and the seven Flying Wards in a casting act. The next circus, Robinson's, comes Friday, and the Sells-Floto show is billed for May 17."

During the first few weeks of the season the show had little trouble in making the railroad moves from city to city. This was not the case for shows that were playing in the east. The Barnum & Bailey show had encountered some problems with the railroads. This may have been due to the railroads being used to move supplies to the east coast for shipment to Europe.

The third week the show was in Charleston, West Virginia; Ashland, Kentucky; Huntington and Parkersburg, West Virginia; and then back into Ohio at Athens and Delaware. At Middletown the John Robinson show again followed Hagenbeck-Wallace. The fourth week the show was in Canton and then played one of the only two Pennsylvania stands of the season in New Castle. Ohio dates in Warren, Youngstown and a two day stand in Cleveland May 11 and 12 followed.

In 1917 there were eighteen circuses traveling by rail. Ringling Bros. was on 85 cars; Barnum & Bailey was on 84; John Robinson was on 45; Sells-Floto was on 43; Al G. Barnes was on 30; Jess Willard-Buffalo Bill was on 28; James Patterson & Gollmar Bros. was on 25; Yankee Robinson was on 24; Cole Bros. was on 20; Coop & Lent was on 20; Sparks was on 15; LaTena was on 15; Gentry Bros. was on 14; Cook Bros. was on 10; J. H. Eschman was on 10; Sun Bros. was on 9 and Cooper Bros. was on 2 cars. The Hagenbeck-Wallace show crossed paths with many of them.

During these early weeks competition was heavy, mostly from the Robinson circus. This kept the opposition brigade busy re-covering paper. Robinson was ahead of them in Dayton, Columbus (where Sells-Floto and Barnum & Bailey were also to follow), Canton, and Cleveland. Ohio was a hotbed of circus activity early in the 1917 season.

An eight horse team is shown pulling a baggage wagon to the lot in Hattiesburg. One of the two Knox trucks is shown behind the horses. W.H.B. Jones photo.







listed 56 cars in the train at Cincinnati.

As to the parade, all the *Billboard* said was: "As a harbinger of the standard of excellence to be expected on the 'lot' the parade this season accomplishes its mission several times over, creating numberless 'ohs' and 'ahs' all along the line, as the nicely groomed stock, fresh and tast-

A gaggle of little shows tramped to Ohio early in the season. Coop & Lent played eleven dates in the middle of May. Sun Bros. played six stands early in May. Sparks Circus was in Ohio for a few dates the second week of May. Andrew Downie's La Tena Circus was also in Ohio early in June. All of these shows played smaller towns not on the Hagenbeck route. Nearly 50% of the railroad circuses on tour in 1917 played the Buckeye state within a six weeks period.

Although the Hagenbeck show was not concerned with the little fellows, the big shows were a problem for the small outfits. The larger circuses billed country routes as far as a fifty miles from the larger cities. Barns in the countryside carried splashes of big show paper next to that of the smaller show playing a small town in the area. The billing brigades of the small circuses were feisty and loved to cover the paper of the large shows.

The Sells-Floto show opened in Wichita, Kansas April 22 and by its third week was in Ohio, although the Floto and the Hagenbeck shows opposed each other in only Columbus and Toledo.

John Robinson opened in Macon, Georgia on April 17 and nine days later was in Indianapolis. Hagenbeck oppos-

**The large Great Wallace bay window hippo cage is shown in a 1917 parade. W. H. B. Jones photo.**

ed Robinson in that city as well as Cincinnati, Middletown, Columbus, Youngstown, Ohio; New Castle, Pennsylvania; Grand Rapids, Lansing and Detroit, Michigan early in the season.

John Robinson beat Hagenbeck-Wallace into New Castle by one day and Youngstown by two days. Cleveland was also to see the Greatest Show on Earth a little later. However in spite of this opposition there were no reports of its having a bad effect on business. Hagenbeck-Wallace was much larger than Robinson and Floto, which were competing with it.

The show moved on fifty-seven cars, 2 advance, 14 stocks, 1 storage car, 27 flats and 13 sleepers. A stock and a flat had been cut from the 1916 train. There is a bit of confusion regarding the number of cars used by the show during the 1917 tour. The 57 total comes from the Havirland list, while a *Billboard* report

**This Carl Hagenbeck cage carried polar bears in the 1917 Hagenbeck-Wallace parade. W. H. B. Jones photo.**



ily painted dens and wagons and the ever present elephants, camels and caliope fly by. From this item on through the various departments the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus is thoroughly complete and of sterling worth." This is a nice ecomium but hardly descriptive for historical purposes.

Since a parade list is not available for the 1917 season it is necessary to reconstruct the parade using photographs and other research material. We have no idea of the order, but will list what we have determined to have been included in the march.

There were at least four wagons that carried bands. They were the Great Wallace bandwagon, the Carl Hagenbeck India tableau, the Carl Hagenbeck Elephant tableau and the Lion's Bride tableau. The 22 foot long Great Wallace wagon, built by Bode for Ben Wallace at a cost of \$1700 in 1902, was the only true bandwagon. It lead the parade with a twelve horse hitch. The Lion's Bride, a highly carved tableau, was the number two bandwagon and was pulled by twelve horses. The Carl Hagenbeck Elephant tableau, pulled by twelve horses, was similar to but larger than the elephant tableau on Sells-Floto. The Carl Hagenbeck India tableau had an eight horse hitch. Both of these outstanding wagons were built by the Bode Wagon Company for the Carl Hagenbeck Wild Animal Circus and being only about ten years old were in excellent condition.

There were two tableaus with painted sides, each with six horse hitches, one with a clown band up and the other with a band, probably from the side show. Other tableau wagons were the so-called Funny Folks with paintings of various clowns and funny figures on the sides, and the Mother Goose tableau, also with paintings on each side. Both were



pulled by eight horses. The Carl Hagenbeck Lion tableau wagon carried a group of lady performers and was pulled by four horses. The fourteen foot Carl Hagenbeck Buffalo and Elk tableau was pulled by an unknown number of horses. In addition there was a small shell wagon that had its origin on the Great Wallace show many years before. This wagon was pulled by ten ponies. The small Harp & Jesters air calliope was pulled by a four donkey hitch. The final wagon was the Carl Hagenbeck steam calliope.

In addition to all of the various band and tableau wagons there were a number of cages. In 1916 the show carried fifteen cages, but in 1917 an inventory of wagons listed twenty-one cages so we must presume that the cages in 1917 were as listed. Of these we can only identify six. There was a very large, heavily carved ornate cage with a six horse hitch which had been built for the Great Wallace show by Sullivan & Eagle in Peru, Indiana, prior to the turn of the century. There were two additional large cages, originally from the Great Wallace show, probably sixteen feet long, one with lions and one with polar bears, each with an eight horse hitch. Both of these large cages were also built by Sullivan & Eagle. A small cage with unknown occupants was pulled by two horses. Following was a smaller cage of lions with four horses. A large bay window hippo cage with quite a few carvings had a six horse hitch. This wagon also went back to the Great Wallace show. A number of the cages had come from the Carl Hagenbeck show and had been used continuously since the shows combined in 1907. There were at least five mounted groups, three six horse, one eight horse and a wild west contingent of twelve riders. Last came six camels and nine elephants.

After the Cleveland date the show made the second and last stand of the season in Pennsylvania at Sharon, before returning to Ohio for eight stands.

The show played Findlay, Ohio, on

May 22. The following day the Findlay *Morning Republican* told of the show's visit. The headline read, "Circus tent periled, many leave grounds." The article told of the problems, "The show management advised patrons to leave but announced that the show would be given at all hazards. Wind and rain threatened for a time Tuesday afternoon to blow over the big top of the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus. As a result hundreds who had paid to see the circus were disappointed because they feared



**The beautiful Great Wallace bandwagon was lost in the train wreck in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1917.**

to remain under the tent for the exhibition. About 3 o'clock a terrific storm which hit the city took some of the poles supporting the tent from the ground and periled the canvas, but it remained in position, despite the heavy strain on the guy ropes and supports. The management advised the patrons to leave. A large number left the tent in the quickest manner possible, many dropping through the openings between the seats and getting out under the tent's side. The exhibition consequently was produced before a reduced audience. In the evening the tent was crowded. All features of the circus were of a high class."

The show was delayed in getting to Toledo the following day. An article in the May 23 Toledo *News Bee* reported the show had been delayed by rain, hail and snow in arriving from Findlay and

the parade had been postponed until 1 p. m. The week was wrapped up in Michigan at Jackson, Grand Rapids and Lansing.

On May 28 in Ann Arbor the show had its first accident of the season. The second section had been loaded and was pulling out of Ann Arbor for Detroit when a wreck occurred at 11 p.m. On May 29 the Ann Arbor *Daily Times News* carried the following article: "A miniature wreck coupled with the inability of the railroads to move circus trains

any more quickly than freight, in these days of congestion, added to the troubles that have been heaped upon the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows thus far this season.

"One of the sections of the circus train, due out of Ann Arbor for Detroit in the early hours this morning, was wrecked, the steam calliope, which had undergone one break-up, was completely wrecked when the train was cut in two sections and in coupling up again in two sections and in

coupling up again struck each other with such force that one of the wagons slid in between the two sections and several cars were thrown off the track.

"The calliope, according to the account of the accident, was thrown off the cars and badly wrecked. But aside from the wrecking of the steam piano and the derailling of three cars little damage was done, except to the auto side show, the great Eskimo mystery, which was the wagon which fell between the two sections.

"The train left Ann Arbor at about 4 o'clock this morning."

The Detroit *Free Press* reported the following day that five cars went off the track. The first section moved on but the third had to wait until the wrecking crews got the second section underway.

The total loss is unknown; however, the Great Wallace bandwagon, the Carl Hagenbeck steam calliope and the side show wagon were demolished. It is not known why the wrecked bandwagon was not mentioned in the newspaper re-



ports. The season was finished with a steamer missing from the parade. The Lion's Bride tableau became the lead bandwagon. The teams that had been used on the Great Wallace bandwagon were combined with those that had pulled the Lion's Bride making an eighteen horse hitch pulling the new lead bandwagon.

The *Detroit Free Press* of May 30 told of the delay in arriving in that city as follows: "The circus system of organization was given a severe test Tuesday when the Hagenbeck-Wallace aggregation arrived in Detroit 10 hours behind schedule, owing to a wreck on the Michigan Central at Ann Arbor. But in spite of the smashed wagons, excited animals, and lack of sleep and meals, the organization proceeded to carry out its full advertised program of a street parade and afternoon and evening performances.

"The parade was four hours late--the circus people making up six of their lost hours as far as public display was concerned. The afternoon performance began at 6 o'clock, and was given practically entire, the outgoing crowd meeting the evening audience in a surging, swirling mass at 8 o'clock.

"One thousand straining, perspiring circus folk went without their dinners in order to 'make good with the public,' and hundreds went supperless. Still hundreds had no sleep. But there was neither complaint nor confusion at the big tented city out on East Jefferson Avenue."

The *Detroit News* also ran an afternoctice on the 30th which read: "Thousands were turned away by the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus Tuesday night, while other thousands witnessed the long, thrilling and interesting program from seats of straw on the ground. Few of the monster crowd knew that the performance was given in spite of many handicaps.

"A wreck in Ann Arbor took 10 valuable hours from workers of the big show, the parade moving late and the afternoon performance not beginning until so late that when the spectators were dismissed they met the advance of the night crowd. Despite this, there were few omissions.

"The night program was the big, satisfying spectacle which has made the Hagenbeck-Wallace show a leader, three rings and two stages being filled with artists and experts, showing feats of skill, nerve, dexterity and originality. The best of the old favorite acts have



**This painted tableau wagon was called "Funny Folks," and carried clowns in the 1917 Hagenbeck parade. W.H.B. Jones photo.**

been retained and improved, while the novelties are numerous. As usual, the Hagenbeck-Wallace show begins with its trained animal acts where other leave off, especially when the big cats are concerned. A half hundred clowns furnished rapid-fire comedy at all times.

"The animal act that held attention closely consisted of 14 large lions in the center cage, directed by Emil Schwyer. Twice during his act Schwyer pulled his cats around like sacks of meal, pried open their jaws, thrust his head into their mouths and held it there probably half a minute.

"The Flying Wards in their aerial act are given the unusual distinction of having the entire tent to themselves. Strong men, polar bears, horses trained until they seem human, richly costumed riding acts by skilled performers, tumblers and contortionists, all these appear on the long program, most of them living up fully to the adjectives used in the program. As usual, the performance concludes with hippodrome races, not the least interesting feature of these being the piloting of flying steeds by their riders through the crowds."

After the two days in Detroit the

show played Adrian after which it moved to Indiana at Fort Wayne and Winchester. While the show undoubtedly had some opposition in this time frame no report of it appeared in the *Billboard*.

Monday June 4 saw the show in Anderson, followed by Marion, Kokomo and Lafayette. Then it moved into Illinois at Champaign and Bloomington. At both Marion and Bloomington they encountered rain. Up until that time the spring had been unusually free of precipitation. In the first seven weeks there had been only six days with rain.

The next week starting June 11 was spent in St. Louis for a six day stand.

What in some past years had been the opening stand, it now came in the ninth week. As usual it was a most successful date.

At this time the show advertised for a solo cornet for the band, salary to be \$20 per week. Considering that the pay was almost tax free in those days and board and room were furnished, this was pretty good pay. The rest of the month of June was spent in Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, showing in Springfield, Peoria, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo and Rochester where they had a late arrival after a 139 mile run. Two days were played in Minneapolis on Saturday June 24th and Monday the 26th. Then came Owatonna, Austin, Fort Dodge, where the show had another rainy day. Rockwell City, Iowa was shown on June 30th. This was another of the small towns that the Hagenbeck show occasionally visited where the entire population, about 2,000, would not fill a quarter of the seats in the big top, yet these stops were apparently quite successful drawing from outlining burgs, using special excursion trains.

Kansas City was played July 9 and 10. Opposition from the Sells-Floto show came here, with Hagenbeck being just a week ahead. The show still had four capacity houses. The show then moved into Kansas at Topeka, followed by Emporia, Winchester and Hutchinson.

The cover of the 1917 printed pro-



gram had the same design as the one used the prior year, with only the year changed. Interestingly enough the title was listed as Carl Hagenbeck Circus. Page three of both programs contained an article about the winter quarters, but the copy was different. The 1917 article started out with, "Aside from the health giving and social attractions of West Baden and French Lick, Indiana, two of the most charming spots in this country, there has been added the unusual home of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus.

"It is in the winter quarters that the foundation is laid for the approaching season, and things done there, decisions made, will be of vital concern to hundreds of people living with the circus and to the financial success of the undertaking. Scores of blacksmiths, carpenters, artisans of all kinds, decorators, harness makers, seamstresses, all these are employed during the long winter months."

In the center of the page was a photo of Ed Ballard. The copy under his photo read, "Ballard commonly saluted by his rural Hoosier neighbors as well as the metropolitan business men, politicians and professional men, as well as members of the sporting fraternity as 'Ed,' is the man behind the gun with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Mr. Ballard bought the interest of Carl Hagenbeck and B. E. Wallace, the founders of this enterprise and he is now its general director and financial sponsor. Every dollar of the capital of this famous circus is now owned by Americans, with Mr. Ballard as the majority stockholder." This later reference is a hint of the anti-German feeling throughout the United States at the time. Carl Hagenbeck, who had died in 1913, or his heirs had never owned any part of the show, and Hagenbeck had at one point had tried to stop what amounted to the unauthorized use of his name. On another page was a photo of R. M. Harvey under which it was stated that Harvey was the business manager and representative of Ballard. Other photos in the program were of Bessie Hill, a rider; Les Alvares, aerialists; Dr. E. Partello, show physician; animal trainer Emil Schwyer; Jennie Ward, double trapeze performer; the Flying Wards and Mayme Ward. Most of these photographs were different than those that appeared in the 1916 program.



**Emma Stickney was a featured rider in the 1917 Hagenbeck performance.**

As was the case with most circus programs of the period, the actual listing of the acts appeared as part of an advertising insert. Local ads took up most of the insert. Banner salesmen sold this space ahead of the show, with the insert covering dates in six cities. In addition to the listing of the performance the full musical program was printed. There were no illustrations in the insert, which usually had 16 pages. The proper inserts were placed in the program for each stand and were printed by the F. J. Riley Show Printing Company of Chicago.

Going into the big top the show visitors were greeted by strains from Fred Jewell's twenty-six piece band, appearing in very striking uniforms playing in the center ring. Miss Jean Reid, saxophonist, and Fred Egner, baritone, garnered applause with their solos as the seats were filling. Stoddard, the clown, kept the crowds in an uproar during the come in with his clever antics on the track. Then with a blare of the trumpets the gorgeous, patriotic spectacle led by Jewell's band playing such inspiring airs as "Maryland My Maryland" and "Dixie Doodle" swung around the track with Uncle Sam in the lead. It was a truly patriotic as well as

circusey conclave based on colonial days. After this imposing start the performance proper got under way.

Display 2. Four groups of living statuary; four women, Indian and horse, two men, and four women. These groups were all in pure white. At the close all four groups broke out American flags to unusually strong applause. This display was followed by two minutes of clowning by the fun makers on the track. A roster of the 1917 clowns is not available, but 39 were listed in the 1916 route book and we can assume that a like number were on the show in 1917.

Display 3. This was a melange of trained wild and domestic animals. Tom Sanger had pigs doing clever tricks; five sea lions did a juggling routine; Emil Schwyer in the steel arena presented ten polar bears from the Hagenbeck school; Billy Hart presented an amusing boxing kangaroo; Miss Egner presented a flock of ordinary geese, slow and awkward, in surprising tricks. This was an unusual but captivating number.

Display 4. Aerialists in all parts of the tent on all manner of equipment presented daring acts. Over the track were Mayme Ward, the Plamandons, Marguerite, Bessie Cattanch, Arthur LaFleur, Billy Ward and the Melnos. Over stage one the Wards gave a daring double trapeze act and over stage two Edna Brock performed on a revolving trapeze.

Display 5. In the end rings elephants were put through a series of tricks, one group of four young ones and the other four large bulls. In the steel arena Emil Schwyer presented a tiger riding an elephant.

Display 6. In the end rings Miss Stickney and Frank Miller gave skillful exhibitions of Indian riding. In the steel arena Emil Schwyer again appeared presenting Alice, the riding lion, with a horse as its mount. The lion leaped through hoops of fire and did other tricks which showed patient training.

Display 7. This was a mixture of various skills. The Cevene trio of young women did a clever butterfly aerial act while hanging by their teeth. Joe LeFleur did eccentric acrobatic feats involving two dogs and a group of five young tigers. Paul Darris did a head balancing trapeze act, and the Two Alvares did an aerial trapeze balancing act.



Display 8. Another number of pleasing variety. Billy Waite threw boomerangs, and Miss Enos did clever juggling on a rolling globe (she was still doing this this act twenty years later on Downie Bros. Circus). Emil Schwyer climaxed the wild animal displays with ten lions perfectly controlled and trained, doing unusual tricks. A contortion act by Lester Duo and a Chinese troupe of contortionists was also part of the display.

Display 9. This display was a grouping of various "Slide for Life" acts. In quick succession Mr. Darras while balanced on his head on a trapeze slid down a tight wire from the top of the tent; Herr Von Ritter slid down a wire while balanced on his head; King Fou came down a wire hanging by his cue; a dog slid down a wire while suspended by his teeth; and Art LaFleur made hundreds of revolutions in the air while suspended by his teeth.

Display 10. Four thrilling perch pole acts by the Dierick Bros., Marguerite and Hanley, the Enos couple and Bell and Aronson.

Display 11. Prior to this number the clown band presented four minutes of fun with music. The clowns were followed by three novelty equine acts. Miss Cottrell presented her horse "Queenie" and a pony in trotting exhibitions. In the center ring was an interesting group of zebras, dogs and an ele-

Herr Von Ritter was a feature of the 1917 Hagenbeck-Wallace performance. This illustration is from a herald.



**Robert Cottrell and Louise Powell, of the Cottrell-Powell riding act posed in the back yard of the 1917 Hagenbeck show.**

phant. In the third ring was a novel liberty horse trotting act.

Display 12. The tent was filled with tight wire acts. J. Barrier riding a bicycle on the wire and juggling, the Pacheros, three men and two women. Pete Arneson was one of the features of the show doing fine work. The Cevene troupe presented a double wire act; the Misses Ward showed their versatility on the wire.

Display 13. This was an outstanding high school horse number with Gladys Gorman riding "Magic" and Dallie Julian driving "Black Beauty" and a buggy on the track. In one end ring were Misses Cattnach, Milvo and Perrine. In the center ring were Misses Brengk, Jenks and Partello. Miss Partello was either the sister or the wife of Dr. Partello who was doctor for many years on various Corporation shows and finally on Cole Bros. in the 1930s.

Display 14. While the advertised as "50" clowns (actually around 39) worked during the entire show, this number was devoted completely to them in various acrobatic burlesques and comical routines. All three rings and two stages were

filled with the funny fellows. In ring one were Ramza and Arno, comedy acrobats; stage one H. Lenzen presented himself on his falling tables, ring two had Rice, Bell, and Baldwin juggling hats; stage two showed the Brock Brothers in comedy acrobatics; and in ring three were the Luster Trio.

Display 15. This was a presentation of exceptional bareback riding. In ring one Dallie Julian, assisted by Frank Miller, presented an outstanding carrying act. In the center ring the Cottrell-Powell Troupe of two men and a woman did a carrying act. In ring three Fred Ledgett and Miss Cattnach presented a carrying act. It is interesting that none of these acts were of the acrobatic or somersaulting type that had been common in earlier years or were to become the rule in the future.

Display 16. This was an unusual acrobatic number presented by five outstanding groups. In ring one the Nanking Chinese, five in number. On stage one the Darras Trio showed classy acrobatic turns. In ring two the Australian Waites (later to headline on the Ringling-Barnum show) exhibited clever and skillful whip cracking. On stage two the Dierick Brothers presented feats of great strength, featuring their sustaining the weight of three elephants. This was an outstanding feature of the show. In ring three the Pachere Troupe performed what was then a novelty, rapid fire acrobatics on a trampoline.

Display 17. Again there were three rings of daring bareback equestrianism. In the three rings Dallie Julian, Frank Miller and Emma Stickney presented graceful and unusual, as well as daring, displays of horsemanship including jockey riding by Frank Miller.

Display 18. The clowns returned for "crazy foolishness." On stage one Coyle and Sanger presented comic bicycle riding and on stage two, Macavoy and Pinckney had a burlesque skating number. While these two acts were being presented the clowns were giving various lampoons of current affairs on the hippodrome track.

Display 19. Over the center ring were





the Six Flying Wards, a flying return act that at the time could not be excelled. Every stunt was good and brought forth great applause. This was probably the outstanding feature of the show.

Display 20. The show concluded with hippodrome races which included a men's steeplechase, jockey race, Cosack riding, Roman standing race, liberty horse race and as the climax a Roman chariot contest. Charlie Flemm and his racing mule gave a light touch during the races.

Following the main performance those remaining for the wild west, or "Frontier Days," as it was called, were permitted to move to the grandstand chairs "without extra" charge beyond buying a concert ticket. Unfortunately we have not been able to find a record of who was in the aftershow. It can be assumed that the usual wild west trick riding and roping were included.

The week of July 16 started after a long 287 mile run from Hutchison, Kansas, to Pueblo, Colorado. The train arrived late Sunday for the Monday date. Then came a 45 mile run to Colorado Springs. The show then moved to Denver for a two day stand. The week ended in Greeley and Sterling. The five Colorado towns gave good business. This week ended with the longest jump of the season.

After the Saturday night performance in Sterling the show traveled 435 miles to Sheridan, Wyoming. In this mountainous country the show sometimes moved in four sections. After Sheridan came Billings and Lewiston in Montana. At Lewiston, due to a 177 mile run, the performance was given in the open air. The parade started at 2 P.M., the doors opened at 3:15 and the show started at 3:45. Then came Great Falls, Helena and Butte. Butte was a two day stand, but only a matinee was given on the second day, Sunday, July 29. This was one of only two Sunday performances of the season. The one performance allowed the show to tear down early for a 213 mile jump to Idaho Falls the next day. That week ended in Twin Falls, Pocatello, followed by Utah stands in Logan, Salt Lake City and Ogden. The last week in the far west was spent at Evanston, Utah; Rock Springs,

Laramie, Cheyenne, Wyoming; and Fort Collins and Boulder, both in Colorado.

The Hagenbeck show turned and started its move back eastward into the south central part of the country. Kansas came first after a 500 mile jump into Salinas, followed by McPherson, Eldorado, Iola and Ottawa. The week closed at Carrollton, Missouri. At

OFFICIAL ROUTE CARD					
HAGENBECK-WALLACE					
SHOWS					
COMBINED					
SEASON 1917					
GENERAL OFFICES, WEST BADEN, INDIANA					
DATE	CITY	STATE	R. R.	MILES	
April 30	Charleston	W. Va.	H. V. and K. & M.	147	
May 1	Ashland	Ky.	C. & O.	66	
May 2	Huntington	W. Va.	C. & O.	16	
May 3	Parkersburg	W. Va.	B. & O.	121	
May 4	Athens	Ohio	B. & O.	37	
May 5	Delaware	Ohio	Hocking Valley	100	
SUNDAY					
May 7	Canton	Ohio	H. V. & Penn.	137	
May 8	New Castle	Pa.	Pennsylvania	78	
May 9	Warren	Ohio	B. & O.	33	
May 10	Youngstown	Ohio	B. & O.	14	
May 11	Cleveland	Ohio	N. Y. Cen.	68	
May 12	Cleveland	Ohio			
Total Mileage to Date				1340	
NOTE--Allow ample time for mail to reach above cities before date given. Card No. 2					

A new illustration was used on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus 1917 route cards.

McPherson, Eldorado and Iola they encountered rain, but business did not seem to suffer. The next two weeks, starting August 20, were spent entirely in Iowa.

An unusual date came next. Starting September 3 the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus played the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln for five days, Monday through Friday. The three rings and two stages were set up in front of the grandstand across the race track. Show seats were set up opposite the fairgrounds grandstand and performing area in the infield. There were no seats at the ends but standees watched the show from these locations. The track was left open so the horses races could continue. Reports indicated that the show was a big draw. It is not known why the show did not play on Saturday, as the fair continued on that day. After the Friday night performance they packed up early and left for Atchinson, Kansas, 129

miles away, where they had two turnaway houses.

To the best of our knowledge the canvas used by the show in 1917 was about the same as in 1916. The big top was a 150 foot round, erected size, the canvas being about 165 feet in diameter. The six center poles were 47 feet in length. Three fifty foot and two thirty foot middles were used. The smaller middles covered the two stages. The menagerie was an 80 foot top with five forty foot middles. The side show was either a 65 or 70 foot round with two forty foot middles. The side show bannerline had eight two high banners, one double width two high banner and a double wide entrance banner making a total flash of about 150 feet.

There were two concession tents and a small pit show on the midway. The pad-room-dressing top was about a 60 foot round with three thirty foot middles. Three or four small tents were also in the backyard adjacent to the dressing top. These were probably used by the Wards and other feature acts as dressing tents. The dining department had a cook top and two dining tents, each of the later being around 30 by 70 feet. One was used by the staff and performers and the other for the working men. One large tent housed the draft stock, about 160 in number. This was about a 60 foot round with three forty-five foot middles.

A long Sunday run of 446 miles, the second longest of the season, took the show to Oklahoma City on September 10 where they had two full houses. Then came Ardmore. On Wednesday the show moved into Texas for twelve stands at Gainesville, Fort Worth, Dallas, Waxahatchie, Corsicana, Hillsboro, Cleburne, Waco, Temple and Brenham. The Texas tour neared its end with a two day stand, Sunday and Monday, September 23-24 in Houston. This was the second and last Sunday show of the season. They closed out Texas at Beaumont on Tuesday.

The Houston stop was right in the middle of a flurry of circus activity in that city. Hagenbeck-Wallace was not the first in, that being Al G. Barnes on Saturday, September 15. Barnes had advertised "1000 animal actors, 65 wild animal acts, 550 horses and ponies, 506 people, 100 trainers, 40 animal



clowns, 30 horses in one act, and a mile long street parade." Hagenbeck-Wallace came in eight days later and advertised "\$3,000,000 invested, \$7,500 daily expenses, 1,000 people, 3 railroad trains, 500 horses and the biggest zoo on earth." There is no report of the business done by the two shows, but because their performances were entirely different they might not have felt much competition from each other.

Another show, of a different format, followed five days later later on September 29. This was the Jess Willard-Buffalo Bill Wild West. Then last, but far from least, came Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows on Tuesday, October 2. This show advertised the spec "Cinderella" with 1,250 actors, 300 dancing girls, 100 musicians and five great trains of marvels. The four shows used the same lot and played the city in a period of two weeks and two days. The lot must have been well torn up by the time the Ringling show pulled off the grounds. All four circuses had large billing crews and there was surely plenty of paper covered and re-covered in the better locations.

With the Texas tour completed only one month remained before the Hagenbeck show would head back to winter

**Another of the 1905 Carl Hagenbeck cages carried lions in the 1917 parade. W.H.B. Jones photo.**



**This 1917 midway view taken in Hattiesburg pictures the side show and the pit show at the far left. The reserved seat ticket wagon is in the lower left. W.H.B. Jones photo.**

quarters. There were two stops in Louisiana at Lake Charles and Baton Rouge. They then moved into Mississippi forstops in Natchez, Brookhaven and Hattiesburg, Laurel, Jackson, Durant, Starkville, Aberdeen, Holly Springs and for an afternoon show only in Corinth on October 9.

It was in Hattiesburg that William H. B. Jones photographed the show. The forty views taken by Jones provide the best photographic coverage available of the 1917 show.

The show played Martin, Tennessee on the 10th, followed by Newbern. The

show moved into Kentucky for stands in Mayfield and Princeton. Monday the 15th it was back in Tennessee at Nashville. The next day in Clarksville, with only a week left in the season, the show's auto was in a severe accident in which the English equestrian Robert Cottrell suffered a broken ankle, and George Pope of the front door staff broke a leg. Both were left behind in a local hospital. Others in the car including Viola, the fat lady, were badly shaken, but not seriously injured.

The season closed in Kentucky at Hopkinsville, Central City, Owensboro, Elizabethtown with the final day in Louisville on October 22. From there the home run of eighty miles was made to West Baden on October 23. The circus was greeted by a severe snow storm as it pulled into its home. The season was exactly 26 weeks long and covered 13,390 miles. Ballard had experienced two good seasons with his ownership of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. The next season would not be so kind to him.

Following the 1914, 1915 and 1916 seasons the show had published route books that were similar in design. After the 1917 season only a season route sheet was issued.

The authors extend thanks John Polacek and Stuart Thayer for making research materials available from their files.





# Gene and Mary Enos

By Steve Gossard

One of the many circus acts which came out of Bloomington, Illinois in the early 1900s was that of Gene and Mary Enos, perch pole performers and globe walkers. This act was a departure from the usual kind of act which originated in Bloomington, which was generally known for its trapeze performers.

Gene "Spec" Enos was born in Elkhart, Indiana December 13, 1886 to Fred and Eva Enos. At some time early in Gene's life his family moved to 824 W. Jefferson St. in Bloomington and his father took up employment as an engineer for the Chicago and Alton Railroad. Gene continued to use this as his permanent address for many years into his professional career.

In 1907 Gene was following in his father's footsteps. The Bloomington-Normal city directory that year listed him as "Enos Eugene, wks C & A res 824 W Jefferson." Gene joined the Olympic Health Club that year and teamed up with Frank DuBois to perform a double trapeze act for parks and fairs. By 1909 Gene had become quite a versatile performer, already working for one of the major circuses in the country, Hagenbeck-Wallace, doing a breakaway ladders act called "Gene and Connors." During that tour Gene met Mary Knyttlova, a member of the Yellton Sisters acrobatic and globe walkers act.<sup>1</sup>

Mary had been born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1892 and had first toured Europe for a few years before coming to the U.S. with the Yellton Sisters act in 1908. Gene and Mary were married at the end of the 1909 season and together they formed the team of Gene and Mary Enos.<sup>2</sup>

In the winter of 1910-1911 Gene took part in the first presentation of the Y.M.C.A. circus in Bloomington. The Enos team did not work together for this performance since women were excluded from participating at this time. Gene performed as a clown with this show.<sup>3</sup>

Although *Billboard* stated in 1933 that Gene and Mary had worked with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus from 1910 until 1922 the Enos act was listed in 1911 as working with Gollmar Bros. Circus with a "five person acrobatic globe and wire act." This act included Mary Creiger, among others. Later in the season they were advertised



Gene and Mary Enos, c. 1915. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library.

as an "acrobatic and iron jaw act." In July of that year Gene was injured in a fall at Madison, South Dakota, and in October "Madam Eros" was injured at Mt. Vernon, Illinois when the strap broke during her iron jaw routine.<sup>4</sup> These injuries could be attributed to their routine being in its formative stages and they were still exploring the limits of their abilities. In 1912 the troupe also included Ray Hendryx.<sup>5</sup>

Ray and his older brother, Leo, were active members of Bloomington's growing circus family during this period.

Though Gene and Mary worked for various American Circus Corporation Shows through the 1920s, at least in the early years, they may have preferred to work for Ringling Bros. if they had had the chance. In a letter dated November 9, 1913, now on file in the Pfening Archives, Gene wrote from Cartagena, Columbia, South America describing his act to Al Ringling: "We do a combination act, consisting of acrobats [sic], rolling globe and high carrying perch. All the understanding in this act is done by the little lady. She throws me somersaults, I do juggling while standing on her head, also a head to head. She goes up and down a six foot high incline on a globe, forward and backwards. We finish with our 20 ft. high carrying perch. I weigh 130 lbs., and the little understander only 117. I do about a three minute routine while on the perch, consisting of different layouts, planges and ect. [sic]."

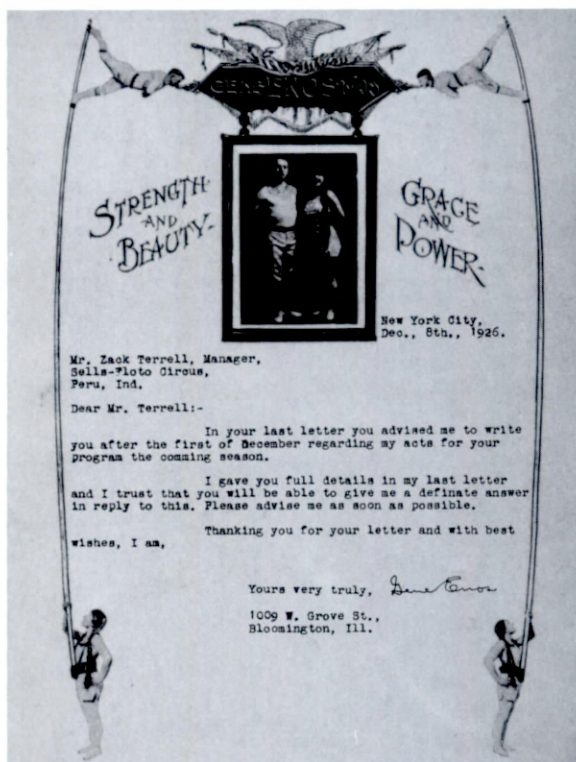
"I also fill in clowning and have a little Boston bull dog I use as a pad dog. My apparatus is all nickle plated and my wardrobe is all first class. . . . My price is \$85.00 a week. We are real circus people, good and useful."

"We are down here touring Central and South America with the Barlow & Dunham Circus. . . ."

Ringling replied that "We find that we cannot place you to advantage for the coming season as we are now well filled in your line."

Gene and Mary practiced at the Y.M.C.A. through the winter of 1913-1914 for a "combination act consisting of acrobats [sic], rolling globe and high perch lady understander." They presented this act for Hagenbeck-Wallace in ring three of display 10 in 1914 wearing costumes of pure white





Letterhead used 1910s and 1920s by the Enoses which shows their perch pole act. Pfening Archives.

silk. At this time Mary's sister was also working with the act.<sup>6</sup>

In spring of 1915 Gene and Mary performed their perch act at the Bloomington Y.M.C.A. circus before again joining the Hagenbeck-Wallace show. Working in display 13 along with three other acts, they performed their perch act, globe act, and juggling.<sup>7</sup>

Though the Y.M.C.A. did not present a circus from 1916 to 1923 the gymnasium was still open to the circus performers for practice during most of that period. The Enoses used these facilities during the winter season of 1916.<sup>8</sup> The *Daily Bulletin* stated on March 21, 1916: "Gene and Mary Enos . . . have signed a contract with the Sells-Floto circus for 1916. Gene has just completed six weeks' vaudeville tour and a two week vacation and began work yesterday to get down to weight. 'Spec' is carrying seven pounds of surplus weight but in a few days this will be gone for the wonder of the air never allows himself to become very heavy. The Enos's report at Wichita, April 20. They were with the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows last

year but received a more flattering contract from the Sells people this year. . . ."

The Enoses performed their perch and rolling globe acts with the Sells-Floto show that season. Gene wrote to Eddie Ward on the Hagenbeck-Wallace show October 3, 1916 from the Sells-Floto show on the road at Modesto, California: "Your short but welcome letter at hand some time ago, we were both glad to hear from you and know that all is O.K.

"We are going along very nicely, but are having some bad weather, rain every day for a week. Hope it don't rain in San Francisco.

"I wrote Mr. Ballard about two weeks ago, haven't [sic] got an answer yet, expect to in a day or so. Hope it is a favorable one. I can come back here if I want to, but would rather be back with you and the rest of our friends. Did you fix for next season yet. I hope you did. When and where do you close. We haven't got our date yet. Will let you know what we do, as soon as I hear. Best wishes to you all from us both as ever your friend Gene Enos [with a marginal note] Write Soon"

Edward M. Ballard was the owner of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1916. Evidently Gene had asked Eddie to intercede on his behalf in some way with the management of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show. This letter is an indication of the close friendship which existed between the Wards and the Enoses, which continued through the years. It also illustrates that, to a certain extent, the performers thought of the circus as "home" and their circus friends as "family" while sharing the nomadic way of life. After so many years with Hagenbeck-Wallace Gene and Mary missed their "family" while performing on the Sells-Floto show.

Evidentially Eddie did manage to "fix for next season" with the management as Gene had requested. The Enoses appeared with Hagenbeck-Wallace in display 10 in 1917 performing a "novelty



Gene and Mary Enos, probably with Hagenbeck-Wallace, c. 1920. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library.

perch act" along with three other perch acts.<sup>9</sup> A *Daily Bulletin* article dated March 9, 1917 described their act: "During the forenoons Gene and Mary Enos put in two hours of grilling practice from 10 o'clock until noon. . . . On the top of a pole 30 feet high Gene Enos balances and does lay-outs and plunges [sic] while Mary balances. Onto this Gene climbs to the top. The most dangerous stunt of the turn is a freestand done on the top of the pole.

A studio photo of Enoses, c.1928-1932. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library.





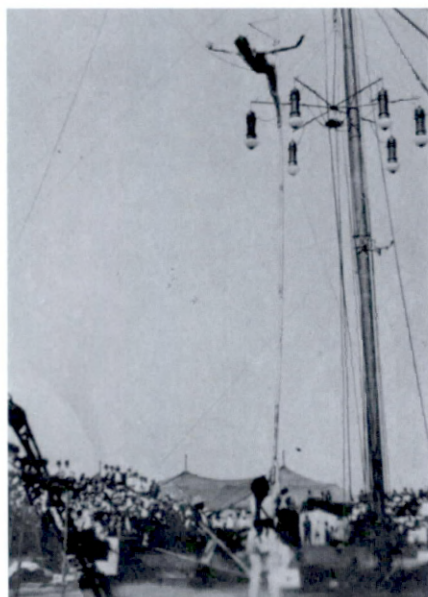
This is a stunt that causes shivers to run up and down the backs of spectators as the least miscalculation would mean a hard fall. In supporting Gene his partner is carrying a weight of 175 pounds. Gene weighing 135 pounds and the pole 40 pounds. Mary who weighs 120 pounds is the smallest woman in the world holding up such a weight in that manner. . . . For the finish Gene slides down the pole hitting the shoulders of his wife and makes a half-somersault to the ground."

On June 16 *Billboard* magazine made remarks concerning the Enos act in covering news of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus: "The H.W. show is like home for Gene and Mary Enos. This makes their fifth season with it. Mary is conceded to be the smallest lady perch understander in the business. Their act never fails to please."

". . . Incidentally the Wards and the Enos are looking forward to the big country dinner when the show plays Bloomington, Ill., their home town."

On June 9 the *Daily Pantagraph* reported: "ARE TO HONOR THE 'WARDS' [sic], - And Also the Enos Troupe of Aerial Performers of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show Tonight."

**Enos perch pole act with Gene atop and Mary as understander. A "Blue Sky" date on Downie Bros., 1928-1932. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library.**



"An event of more than passing interest in connection with the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus, which shows in Bloomington today, will be staged this evening when Bloomington friends will present the Flying Wards and the Enos troupe with a handsome remembrance. Joseph Burt, of No. 3 fire station, a life-long friend of the Ward and Enos troupes, who was instrumental in securing the first engagements for these famous aerialists and who afterwards assisted them until they won a reputation and attained national fame in the show realm, has been busy for several days planning this little surprise. The friends contributed liberally to the cause and the local performers as a result will receive a grand ovation in their 'Old Home Town.'

"At the close of the act of the Flying Wards, thru the courtesy of the Hagenbeck-Wallace management, Equestrian Director Bud Gorman will call the Ward troupe into the stage and will call Gene and Mary Enos from their dressing rooms. Mr. William Peterson will then present to the Wards a floral horseshoe four feet in height and to the Enos troupe a handsome bouquet of flowers. To all the lady members of the troupes a box of fine chocolates will be given."

The winter of 1917-1918 the Enoses played "association time in and around Chicago" and they were anticipating returning to Hagenbeck-Wallace for the 1918 season. In March Gene and Mary played the Empress Theatre in Des Moines, Iowa, where Gene visited the service men at Camp Dodge, saluting everyone in uniform from generals to buck privates. Corporal Glen Walley, reporting for the *Daily Bulletin*, stated that Mary "entertained the company mothers" at the Hostess House by giving "a few numbers in her womanly art." Of the show at the Empress Theatre, Walley stated, "'Little' Mary was voted the strongest woman in captivity and Gene was rated as a lucky guy to have a wife so stout." Wally added, "As one woman said, 'I'll bet she could get out a heap of washings in a day.'" Walley went on to say that the Enoses would play four days in St. Paul, then go to Fargo, Janesville, and St. Cloud before returning to the circus. Walley remarked that Gene "saw several thou-



**Mary Enos did a single elephant act on Downie in 1931 and 1932. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library.**

sand men whom he believed would make good tumblers and acrobatic artists."<sup>10</sup>

Gene and Mary were involved in the tragic wreck which occurred with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus train in the early morning hours of Saturday June 22, 1918. As the circus train sat on a siding near Ivanhoe, Indiana an empty troop train unexpectedly slammed into the rear end, telescoping the wooden coaches into one another. Fire spread from the gas lamps through the wreckage, burning all who were left trapped inside. A *Daily Bulletin* article stated on June 24: "When the crash came Gene and Mary Enos occupied a berth on one of the wrecked sleepers. They could hear the engine ploughing through their train and within a second found themselves held down by wreckage exerting all their strength to keep from being crushed to death. Mary was sleeping next to the window and managed to work herself free from the imprisoning timbers. By placing her shoulders against a timber and exerting all her strength she was able to pull Gene out from under the timbers. He was bleeding from the throat, ears, face and his eyes were filled with blood. His wife pulled him from the wreck and he then lost consciousness. She then carried and



dragged him over the fence which separates the two railroads, then across the other railroad [track] and over the other fence where they were met by a man who handed them two blankets in one of which Gene was wrapped and the other was wrapped about Mary who at that time was wearing a nightdress which was but a torn rag. Her feet were badly cut by glass. They were removed to Gary to Mercy hospital where Mary yesterday appeared to be in good physical condition with the exception of her cut foot. Gene was a mass of bandages about his head from which his blood-shot eyes looked out. He suffered a broken collar bone and bad cuts and bruises."

Eddie Ward was quoted in the *Daily Pantagraph* June 24: "I helped to take out Mrs. Eugene Enos but Eugene himself, though badly hurt, was not so fortunate. He was covered with blood. Mrs. Enos fought like a tiger to pull him away from the advancing flames."

"An interview with Gene and Mary from the same article ran as follows: "(Mrs. Enos) talked about the catastrophe and exprest [sic] great sorrow over the great loss of lives."

"It all came so shockingly sudden," she said, "for our train was standing still, that they can scarcely realize yet that it is true."

"But it is," put in her husband pointing to the bandages he had. "Oh, it was a fright for a fellow to lie there feeling that every passing moment brought you nearer the end, and yet be helpless to move [sic]. What would I have done if it hadn't been for Mary?"

"... How I wish I could have done more for those poor people," is Mrs. Enos' constant worry.

"Everyone was calling for a drink of water. So many were more scared than hurt, and wandered about, dazed so badly that they they [sic] could do nothing. . . . We'll go back on the road as soon as I get over this little knockout," said Mr. Enos. "First we'll go home and rest a bit, and then back on the job. But I wouldn't stand on my head today for all the money in the world. Would I? Would I?" And he smiled lovingly at the little woman who had worked like a de-

mon to save his life. . . . Their escape is miraculous for the two Connors, another couple who did an acrobatic act, who were in the same car, were killed."

A *Daily Bulletin* article dated June 25 related a story of confusion and despair as Gene's parents searched for news of their fate: "Mr. and Mrs. Enos left here Friday morning intending to



**Mary Enos demonstrated her strength by lifting boxer Jack Dempsey aloft for this publicity photo probably taken during her time with Downie Bros. in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Author's collection.**

surprise Gene and Mary by appearing unannounced at the performance of the circus. They arrived in Gary about 9 o'clock in the morning awaiting the street parade having heard nothing of the accident and were standing on the street about 10 o'clock when they first heard of the catastrophe. Terror stricken they at once started for the nearest hospital. A hasty inquiry failed to produce any information and as they were leaving the hospital Mr. Golmar, the owner of the circus appeared, and recognizing Mr. Enos he called him aside.

"There is no use mincing words Mr. Enos," he said his eyes filled with tears. "Gene and Mary have both been burned to death."

"It was a terrible revelation to the father but he resolved that he would make certain before telling Mrs. Enos."

"All day long Mr. Enos searched among the wreck victims, exploring hospital and morgue, and it was not until 6 o'clock that night that he at last found his two loved ones."

"Neither were seriously injured. Gene had suffered a bad scalp wound and his face was badly cut by flying glass. Mrs. Enos' injuries consisted of a badly sprained back sustained in lifting the heavy timbers which buried her unconscious husband. After she had freed him she carried him two blocks though her feet were bleeding so badly that she could scarcely stand."

"Mr. Enos stated that that day's experience when torn with uncertainty, he traveled from one end of the town to the other, in search of some word from his son and daughter-in-law, whom he supposed dead, was the most terrible that he has ever endured, but it was worth all the mental suffering . . . to find . . . that they were alive."

Gene was treated for a broken collar bone and eye injuries and was released from the hospital

some time before July 10, but it is doubtful that they were able to rejoin the show that year.<sup>11</sup>

In 1919 Gene and Mary listed their address as 609 W. Washington Street in Bloomington, Illinois. This was Gene's first move away from his boyhood home on W. Jefferson Street just a few blocks away. Unlike the Wards, who did not work with a circus for the next two years, the Enoses were back with Hagenbeck-Wallace that year. They appeared in display 8, ring 1, a display which *Billboard* described as "little aerial acts," along with another perch act, aerial ladders, a rings act, and single trapeze. That winter they toured Central and South America with Santos Y Artigas Circus.<sup>12</sup>

They remained with Hagenbeck-Wallace for the next five years. In 1921 they appeared in display 22. In 1922 they were again presented in display 22 along with another act in center ring, four other perch acts showing in the other two rings. During the winter of





Gene balances on one hand on wife Mary's head, probably on Downie, c. 1930. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library, Clyde Srapbook Collection.

1922-1923 they practiced in the Ward barn. Mary's sister, Emily, joined the act in 1923 to form a three person act. The *Daily Bulletin* of December 10, 1923 stated that "the three do a posturing and rolling globe. Gene does a perch act." That year they participated in display 8 of the program doing double trapeze as the "Enos Duo" along with twelve other trapeze and aerial ladders acts. Mary also did her globe routine in display 16 with three other acts and they did their perch act in center ring of display 23 along with two other acts which worked the outside rings. In their last season with Hagenbeck-Wallace Mary again performed her globe act in display 15 along with two other acts and they performed their perch act in center ring of display 15 along with three other acts which worked the outside rings.<sup>13</sup> Hagenbeck-Wallace apparently changed their format in 1925, the numerous small aerial acts giving over to a performance dominated by animal acts.

An article in the *Daily Pantagraph* March 14, 1953 stated that Gene and Mary had worked with "Maine's and

Downey's" in the 1920s. They were probably working with the King Brothers' Walter L. Main show during the years from 1925-1927. The *Pantagraph* article described the Enos act as follows: "It is relatively simple--if you can do it. One performer, called the 'understander,' holds and balances a 30 foot pole that fits into a belt at the waist. The other performer, at the top of the pole, does the acrobatic stunts. Mary was the 'understander' in this act, and Gene did the stunts at the top of the pole, which was equipped with handlebars. He did a free head balance and a teeth swivel among other things. At the end of the act, he'd slide down the pole head first, do a half somersault off Mary's shoulders, and catch the pole as she dropped it."

In 1926 Gene offered his perch and globe act to the Sells-Floto Circus for \$125 per week. He stated, "I hope you have had your meeting and have decided on a straight CIRCUS performance for the coming season. . . ." Various circuses, Sells-Floto in particular, had been combining their regular circus performances with wild west shows, which might necessarily mean that they would have to cut some of the numerous smaller acts out of the program. Zack Terrell replied, "we have not as yet made any decision as to what kind of a show we will have . . . would advise you to write in about the first of December. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

In November of 1927 Gene signed a

**Gene and Mary Enos' residential vehicle on Downie Bros. 1930-1932. Illinois State University, Special Collections, Milner Library, Clyde Noble Scrapbook Collection.**



contract with Downie Bros. World's Best Shows to provide "Double acrobatic and perch act, single rolling globe act. Mr. Enos to act as equestrian director. Mrs. Enos to have full charge of wardrobe," for the 1928 season at "One hundred and one dollars per week, board and gas & oil for the truck." A notation at the bottom of the contract read, "\$10.00 per week board will be charged for each pet dog carried with the show." An article from the March 30, 1929 *Billboard* stated that the Enoses would be returning to the Downie show after a five month tour through Europe. They were said to have seen numerous circuses during their travels overseas as well as visiting the Ringling show and the Sells-Floto show on returning to the U.S. According to a *Daily Pantagraph* article of January 3, 1959 Gene and Mary had made five tours through Europe, but the article did not state whether they had worked with the circus or on the stage while overseas.

In November of 1928 Gene and Mary signed another contract with the Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus for the 1929 season. The contract called for "Double acrobatic and Perch Act, single rolling globe act. Mr. Enos to act as equestrian director Mrs. Enos to have full charge of wardrobe - same as 1928 season" for the same salary as before with "board and gas and oil for car." This year Mary began working with Anna White presenting a trained goat act as well.

Contracts were signed in April of 1930 for the tent season that year. Their duties were defined as before with the addition of "single elephant and goat act" in which Mary performed and their salary was increased to \$113 per week. Again "board and gas & oil for car" were provided. Their address was now 1009 West Grove St., Bloomington, Illinois.

The Enoses' contract with Downie Bros. for the 1931 season listed their duties as before. Their salary was decreased, however, to \$85 per week. Oil and gas were to be provided as before but there was no mention of "board" being provided by the show. This may have been the year that Gene and Mary bought the little house truck which was their home while



traveling with the Downie show for the next two years. The cut in pay may have been due to the general economic problems which the country faced at that time. The winter of 1931-1932 they played indoor theaters with the vaudeville circuit calling themselves "Dutch and Dutchie" in costumes of Holland. Their contract with Downie Bros. for 1932 was the same as that of 1931, however a pen and ink correction sometime after the contract was drawn up deleted the acrobatic act from their duties.<sup>15</sup>

Articles from *The Boston Sunday Globe* from July 26, 1931 and *The Chattanooga Times* of May 1, 1932 described Gene and Mary's life style while traveling with the Downie show. The *Globe* article stated:

"On the body of an ordinary ton-and-half truck had been constructed a cozy one-room house, with curtained windows; soft, cushioned couch across the back which, at night, pulls out into a broad and comfortable bed; a washstand, camouflaged to resemble a table; a big clothes closet, with a mirror on the door, and a number of small built-in cabinets. There were several folding chairs and a small trunk, the latter painted white to match the woodwork. . . ."

"We get up in the morning at 6, 7, or 7:30, according to the distance to the next stand," Mr. Enos told the reporter . . . . "We use the truck to dress in," contributed Mrs. Enos. . . . "After the night show we sit about and talk a bit or listen to the radio, and then go to bed. . . . On Sundays a group of us take a big truck and go picknicking. . . . If possible my husband and I go to church on Sundays. Then sometimes if there is no picnic we may go to the talkies."

The *Times* article stated: "No chance are to be taken so sobriety is necessary . . . . Neither of the Enos [sic] smokes or uses tobacco in any form. Gene has to talk a great deal, as he directs the performances . . . and therefore a clear voice is necessary. Mary has never smoked a cigarette."

"The two work in vaudeville in winter and tour with the circus in the summer months. In the late summer they expect

to go to Europe to visit the former home of Mary, who is anxious to get back. . . .

"When we are not with the circus sometimes it seems we simply cannot stay in a house [Mary says]. It is stuffy



**In 1936 Gene Enos was equestrian director on Russell Bros. Pfening Archives.**

and uncomfortable after being out in the open as we are at work on the road. Life is so much more pleasant if lived out of doors and the circus people know and love it. . . .

"I started as a child to be an acrobat and I like it. I like all kinds of sports, too. Swimming and golf are perhaps my favorites, but I also like basket ball and baseball."

"Gene is a thirty-second degree Mason. He manages the performances and presents the acts. He has trouped with all the larger circuses in the country, but likes his present job as well as any."

"Motor transportation for a circus is far superior to railroad transportation," Mr. Enos said. "We have much more home life with motors than we could ever have on trains. We have our little houses on wheels and we have all the conveniences of a first class hotel." A peep into the home where Mary was busily applying make-up for a performance showed a snug little interior, fitted with stationary lavatory, a couch, a radio, sewing machine, a typewriter and a stool and chair, with a number of personal belongings, such as pictures and souvenirs.

"It is spotlessly clean and homelike and a hospitable air pervaded the house on wheels. The exterior is painted a grayish white and therefore it does not 'show dirt' as a white or a lighter color would. No cooking is attempted in the house because of the elaborate cook tent available. 'It is not worth while to try to cook for just two people when the cook tent is available,' Mrs. Enos explained. . . .

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Enos are charming to visitors and are most cordial. While they have no children of their own, they are very fond of children and are most proud of two tots who are now performing, one of which is a member of an acrobatic family from Mexico."

Gene and Mary were probably contracted to return to the

Downie Bros. Circus in 1933 but they were unable to work with the show that year. Gene lost his apple cheeked "little understander" just after returning from Europe on April 28 in Yonkers, New York, where they had been living with Mary's sister and brother-in-law for the past few years. The obituary printed in the *Daily Pantagraph* the next day stated that she had died of "complications." *Billboard* magazine stated May 13 that she had died of "heart palpatations."

Gene put together a solo act which he performed with the Plantation Show at the Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago.<sup>16</sup> He is next found working as equestrian director for the Polack Bros. Circus when it played in Peoria, Illinois in March of 1935. In 1936 he joined into partnership with Bert Doss, formerly of the Flying Wards, the Flying Thrillers, and the Flying Burtons. They opened a circus night club in Bloomington, complete with canvas, posters, and other show trappings. In January of 1937 *Billboard* stated that Gene "Ballys the streets of Bloomington" in a panel truck equipped with a public address system "putting his club on the map." That year he married Rose Burke of Bloomington, and she worked as mistress of ceremonies for the club. That year Gene served as equestrian director for the Russell Bros. Circus for a salary of \$30 per week.<sup>17</sup>



When Gene suffered a stroke in 1953 the *Daily Pantagraph* ran an article which stated that he had "announced and directed off and on [since Mary's death] and he was interested in a few activities in Bloomington. Finally in 1938 he quit the circus business for good, and bought a home at 1410 N. Fell Ave. [in Normal, Illinois]. . . . Since 1941 he has been working at Eureka Williams, as receptionist for a time, now as a guard. . . . In recent years he's acquired . . . a local reputation as an announcer at boxing matches. He's done some wrestling announcing, too."

Gene died Friday January 2, 1959 at St. Joseph Hospital in Bloomington.<sup>18</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. *Daily Pantagraph* March 14, 1953 p. 2; January 3, 1959 p. 13.
2. *Billboard* May 13, 1933 p. 51.
3. *Daily Pantagraph* December 29, 1910 p. 7.
4. *Billboard* May 27, 1911 p. 24; July 8, 1911 p. 26; July 15, 1911 p. 25; October 7, 1911 p. 28; October 14, 1911 p. 26; October 21, 1911 p. 28.
5. *Daily Pantagraph* March 8, 1939
6. *Daily Bulletin* March 19, 1914 p. 3; August 23, 1914 p. 15; *Billboard* April 18, 1914 p. 7; May 9, 1914 p. 36; "Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season of 1914," Gordon M. Carver, *Bandwagon* November-December 1985.
7. *Daily Pantagraph* March 19, 1915 p. 5; *Billboard* February 13, 1915 p. 23; May 1, 1915 p. 14; *Daily Bulletin* March 24, 1915 p. 9; March 26, 1915 p. 3; "Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season 1915," Gordon M. Carver, *Bandwagon* March-April 1986.
8. *Billboard* May 20, 1916 p. 23; June 17, 1916 p. 62; Letter on file, Illinois State University, Milner Library Special Collections.
9. *Billboard* April 28, 1917 p. 8; June 11, 1917 p. 5.
10. *Billboard* January 5, 1918 p. 29. *Daily Bulletin* March 24, 1918 p. 5.
11. *Daily Bulletin* June 23, 1918 p. 2; June 24, 1918 p. 2; June 25, 1918 p. 4 & p. 10; *Daily Pantagraph* June 24, 1918 p. 3; June 27, 1918 p. 3; July 6, 1918 p. 54; July 20, 1918 p. 24.
12. *Billboard* May 3, 1919 p. 83; Poster, Illinois State University, Milner Library Special Collections.
13. *Official Route, Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season 1920*, performers' list; *Billboard* May 7, 1921 p. 117; June 18, 1921 p. 65; *Official Route, Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season 1922*, performers' list; *Daily Pantagraph* March 22, 1923 p. 11; "Carl Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Season 1923," Chang Reynolds, *Bandwagon* September-October 1966; Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Programs 1922, 1923, 1924.
14. Letters on file, Pfening Collection.
15. *Billboard* May 4, 1929 p. 54; August 22, 1931 p. 60; October 31, 1931 p. 31; December 19, 1931 p. 32; Contracts on file, Downie Bros. 1928-1931, Illinois State University Milner Library Special Collections.
16. *Billboard* August 26, 1933; November 11, 1933 p. 30.
17. *Billboard* March 30, 1935 p. 45; March 7, 1936 p. 34; May 2, 1936 p. 32; July 11, 1936 p. 35; December 19, 1936 p. 36; *Daily Pantagraph* January 3, 1959 p. 13.
18. *Daily Pantagraph* January 2, 1959; January 3, 1959 p. 13.

#### PHOTOS

Four 8 x 10 black and white photos of the Cole Bros. Circus train wreck July 27, 1945, Brainard, Minn.

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#### CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT MAY 1, 1986 TO APRIL 30, 1987

Cash Beginning May 1, 1986:	
Savings Account	5,463.98
Checking Account	243.02
	\$5,707.00
Receipts:	
Dues	19,922.00
Subscriptions	2,885.40
Advertising	2,976.00
Back Issue Sales	2,753.94
Bank Interest	826.50
1985 Convention & Auction	8,304.50
Total	\$37,668.34
Expenses:	
Bandwagon Printing	23,214.48
Misc. Bandwagon Expenses	10,300.19
Postage	1,476.00
Bank Service Charge	96.00
1986 Convention	4,507.88
Total	\$39,594.88
Receipts & Beginning Cash	43,375.34
Expenses	39,594.55
	\$3,780.79
Cash on Hand 4-30-87	8.85
Checking Account	160.62
Savings Account	3,611.32
	\$3,780.79

Respectively Submitted By  
Johann W. Dahlinger, Secretary-Treasurer



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# Only Big Show Coming

## CHAPTER 2 PART ONE

### The Indescribable Nondescript By Orin C. Kling

The first show for Topeka in 1873 exhibited May 1. Circus claims have always great been inflated, but the boasting of J. M. Chandler, general agent of the Great Trans-Atlantic Exposition, Museum, Circus, Menagerie, Aviary, Aquarium and Grand European Hippodrome violated all modesty.

The show's advertisement in the Topeka *Daily Commonwealth*, April 27, revealed that the museum contained 100,000 rare curiosities; the menagerie contained 500 living wild animals, among them "a monster Black Rhinoceros weighing two tons." Among the sea monsters, sea lions, and seals of the aquarium were "Two Monster Crocodiles, 22 Feet in Length, from the River Nile." The 100 star performers appeared in two rings and the pavilions at night were illuminated by 5,000 gas jets. The parade was two miles long and featured "Three Full Brass and Reed Bands and a Grand Military Band." There was a balloon ascension every day. Adults, 50 cents; children, 25 cents.

The *Commonwealth* on May 2 reported, "Topeka was yesterday bowed down under a disappointment as bitter and an affliction as heavy as the hog cholera or the horse disease. A circus came to town and it rained like a second deluge, making a very tame and wet affair, and washing the paint off the automatons, causing them to look like miniature

mummies without their Sunday clothes on. The procession passed through the principal streets at the usual hour, the ponies and goats sinking almost out of sight in the mud, which, to use a sweet

"In the evening the attendance was what might be called good. It was different in that respect from the show."

Later in the season the Great Trans-Atlantic appeared in Chetopa on July 18. Chetopa was also a target for George W. DeHaven's Great Chicago Show, Museum, Menagerie and the Best Circus in the World, starring James Robinson, "Master Horseman of America," scheduled for Saturday, August 9. DeHaven was operating under a bond posted in Cincinnati pending dissolution of a partnership involving DeHaven, D. Loring and Spencer Q. Stokes. Loring and Stokes were opposed to the gambling fostered by DeHaven and to the unprofitable routing DeHaven devised. The Great Chicago Show attacked the Great Trans-Atlantic Exposition in the advertising columns of Chetopa's weekly newspaper, the *Southern Kansas Advance* on July 16. The editor joined DeHaven in a bit of chicanery that was unfair to the reader as well defrauding the Trans-Atlantic. A quick glance at the ad gives the impression that the Trans-Atlantic would play Chetopa on August 9, whereas only a careful reader would discover the correct date, July 18, almost hidden in the body of the *Trans-Atlantic* ad.

The Topeka *Daily Commonwealth* in reviewing the Trans-Atlantic performance had hinted at deficiencies, but the editor of the *Southern Kansas Ad-*

**AUGUST 9th.**

Not until

**AUGUST 9TH**

Will the

**Big Show!**

Be at

**Chetopa.**

**AUGUST 9th.**

Remember will Exhibit at Chetopa, **August 9th.**

**Great Trans-Atlantic Exposition**



**Museum, Circus, Menagerie, Aviary, Aquarium and Grand European Hippodrome!**

**The LARGEST and BEST SHOW on EARTH.**



**100 STAR PERFORMERS**

**SEVEN COLOSSAL TENTS COVER FIVE ACRES OF GROUND.**

**Grand Free Balloon**

**Remember the Date, CHETOPA, FRIDAY, JULY 18TH.**

**Doors Open at 1 and 7 P. M.**

Admission, 50 Cts. Children, 25 Cts.

**J. M. CHANDLER, Gen. Agent**

**Be Sure and Wait FOR THE BIG SHOW**

**AUGUST 9th.**

Not Until

**AUGUST 9TH**

Will the

**Big Show!**

Be at

**Chetopa.**

**AUGUST 9th.**

Remember, will Exhibit at Chetopa, **August 9th.**

A truly dirty trick: the end columns for the August 9 date are for the Great Chicago Show; center ad is for Great Trans Atlantic Circus on July 18. From *Southern Kansas Advance*. Chetopa, Kansas, July 16, 1873. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

comparison, was of the consistency of good sorghum molasses.

"In the afternoon a performance was given to a fair crowd, composed mostly of Kaws [local Indians] and country folks, the stormy weather preventing the residents of the city from attending.



vance, July 23, was not restrained by conventional niceties, but in his attack provided a good view of the show: "The 'Great Atlantic-Exposition' has come and gone. Two of Chetopa's lots, not remarkable for their dimensions, only were required for their 'seven colossal tents.' Their gas had all evaporated, consequently their balloon would not go up. The 'magnificent procession,' two miles long was condensed to about forty rods, with the wagons two or three rods apart. In the 'museum of 100,000 rare curiosities,' the chief curiosity was that ancient and dishonorable insect known as *humbug*. The '500 living animals' had nearly all died, and but few aside from a cage of very common monkeys were left. The monster black rhinoceros had escaped in Texas, and the sea monsters, sea lions, seals, crocodiles, *slid out* while they were being watered in the Gulf of Mexico. The greater part of the 100 star performers had deserted the outfit, and are staking out claims down in the Indian Territory. There was a town full of people to attend this tail end of a circus and menagerie, and we are sorry they did not get their money's worth after coming so far through the dust and dirt."

Patrons of the Great Chicago Show also fared poorly, according to a review in the *Miami Republican*, Paola, August 2, of the exhibition there on July 29: "The circus has come and gone, and no circus ever held in Miami county received a better patronage, and none deserved it less. The riding of James Robinson was said to be the best in the world, of course, but aside from this and four or five other features, the testimony of all who were present is that, in a less than usual degree, met the expectations excited by the posters and advertisements. The sideshows were little else than gambling hells, and we have heard the whole thing spoken of as a traveling combination of blacklegs and barelegs. The three-card monte business was carried on under the tent in full swing until effectively squelched by the

police. The whole outfit, it is estimated, took in upward of \$2,000."

The second show of the season to play Topeka was John Robinson's Great World's Exposition, Museum, Aquarium, Animal Conservatory, and Strictly Moral Circus on August 1.

Old John Robinson had established a strong reputation with Topekans when he played the town in 1871 to large and satisfied audiences. Old John was a generous advertiser. In addition to ads two columns wide the length of the page, he made prolific use of short items of two or three lines in the news columns. From the Topeka *Daily Commonwealth*: "Snow white Yak, and a spiral horned African Eland, in old John Robinson's animal conservatory, Friday, August 1st.

"African Harte Beaste, Polar or White bear and arctic seals, in old John Ro-

"Robert Stickney, the champion single or four-horse rider of the world, and who does a double somersault over fifteen large horses, can only be seen in John Robinson's great World's Exposition, Friday, August 1st."

And others.

In display ads Robinson boasted of "Special Trains of Cars." An advertisement in the *Troy Weekly Chief* for an exhibition July 26, claimed a train of 80 cars. Robinson, in all towns, claimed 2,000 men and horses, 100 male performers, and--following mention of 60 of the smallest ponies in the world--"20 Beautiful Lady Celebrities." In some ads there were 52 cages of wild beasts, and in others, only 42. There were always 40 musicians and the tent could always seat 15,000.

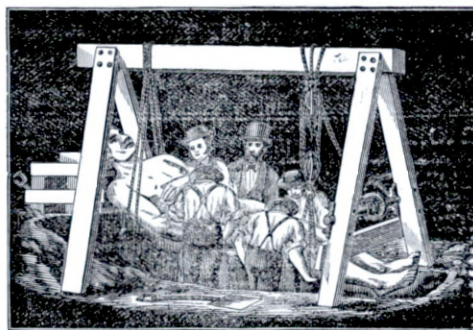
Everywhere, the show was complimented on its fine menagerie. Robinson advertised a hippo, rhino, nine sea lions that ate 500 lbs. of fresh fish every day, a 5-ton elephant, "1 Royal Nondescript Taurus, with 3 Horns and eyes; cost \$9,000, and the only one in Africa," fifteen lions, and "fifth of a Mile of Anacondas and Boa Constrictors in a huge Crystal Den." The advertised list included a "South African Giraffe, 9 feet, 2 inches high" and a "Giant Ostrich, 15 feet high--not an Emu." Ads bore the name "O. P. Myers, Gen'l Advertiser."

The only performers mentioned by name were Robert Stickney, and a rarity among performers of the day, "the colored boy Lewis, representative southern jockey and flying horseman, with Old John Robinson, Friday, August 1st."

The lot selected, between Ninth and Tenth streets on Monroe street, was not used.

The *Commonwealth* reported, August 2, that, coming from Lawrence, "Old John Robinson and his canvas city arrived in town yesterday morning, pursuant to announcement. In consequence of the heavy rains, present and prospective, he decided to locate his portable

## G. G. GRADY'S GREAT THREE TENT SHOW !



Enlarged for 1873, Consisting of  
A Magnificent Museum, Mammoth Menagerie,  
**GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS !**  
**AND FREE BALLOON ASCENSION,**  
**Will Exhibit at Wauseon, O., Tuesday, May 6th, 1873**

In 1873 the G. G. Grady Circus appeared in Kansas with a balloon ascension as a feature. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise noted.

binson's World's Expedition, August 1st.

"Five great golden chariots and tableau cars, drawn by Flemish horses, and sixty of the smallest and prettiest ponies in the world can be seen only in John Robinson's great public procession, Friday, August 1st.



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the wind prevents, in which case the manager feels sure the wind will lull and the balloon ascend by 6 p.m. or near about. Several persons representing three races of men, have been drinking a mixture of dust and cider all the afternoon, but the effect upon them, we trust, will not be very serious."

"The balloon ascension," according to the *Commonwealth*, "went off in first-class style." None of the papers mentioned the descent, whether Planter parachuted to earth or stayed with the balloon.

The show was managed by W. H. Dwyer; John W. Whitehurst, general agent; and William Myers, treasurer. The owner, G. G. Grady, advertised that he always responded to the patrons of his strictly moral circus and wishing to offend no one, had arranged the interior of the tents in such a manner that "those who do not wish to witness the Circus performance can remain in the Menagerie department, which is separate."

The *Commonwealth* reported, "The last circus of the season has gathered its nickels and departed. A fair crowd was in attendance, made up of all sorts of humanity, from the city spruce to the Injun from the reserve. No one knows where all the moccasined feet sure to be at every show come from, nor where they go. The deaths in a tribe can be accurately determined by noticing those absent from the genuine circus."

As the story continued the *Commonwealth* was unkind to a show nearing the end of a long hard season: "As we watched the tired, jaded and evidently debilitated cavalcade go down the avenue we could not shut our eyes to the fact that the flags were faded and weather stained, and with their standard bearers on the perambulating chicken coops, seemed to have done duty on the battlements of time a full half century, without being relieved or having had a use for the washerwoman during that period."

It was rumored that Grady was looking for a suitable winter quarters. Where the show wintered is not known, but it was not Topeka.

Most people considered Old John Robinson's show the best of the year in Topeka, but the editor of the North Topeka *Times* championed Grady's Great

American. "Grady's circus though unheralded by any great flourish of trumpets, all in all, was superior to any exhibition of the kind in Kansas for years. By comparison it discounts 'Old John Robinson' a hundred per cent."

#### 1874

The entire season of 1874 for Topeka was compressed into ten days in a contest between W. W. Cole's Great New York and New Orleans Zoological and Equestrian Exposition scheduled for April 27, and the Great Eastern Menagerie, Museum, Aviary, Circus, Hippodrome and Egyptian Caravan starring the "Original James Robinson," billed for May 6.

In the summer of 1873, Cole had played several dates in Kansas, including Chetopa May 14, and Salina May 17. An ad in the Chetopa *Southern Kansas Advance* boasted that the show was "traveling exclusively and only by rail, and requiring a special train of twenty-seven cars."

The *Saline County Journal*, May 22, 1873, published a brief review of the exhibition given in Salina: "One thing which created a bad feeling towards the circus was their charging twenty-five cents more for their admission tickets than they advertised. [Published prices, Adults, 50 cents, children, 25.] It was a downright swindle. The performances, however, are pronounced the best of the kind that ever came off in Salina. The show of animals was good, although that mule which was striped according to order in imitation of the zebra, was pronounced by some to be a base imitation. The gorilla we did not discover."

Before each matinee M'lle. Christina gave a free exhibition, walking a wire from the ground to the top of the highest pole. The *Saline County Journal* reported, "The aerial ascension by the young lady who was careless about her toilet was performed in the presence of an admiring multitude--admirers of the garments she didn't wear."

In another column the *Journal* reported gambling. "One fellow sweat himself white over the loss of \$120 which he lost; another man nearly cried as he saw the gambler's scrawny fingers draw out \$60 of his hard earned money; while others, who should have known better, were ashamed of themselves for

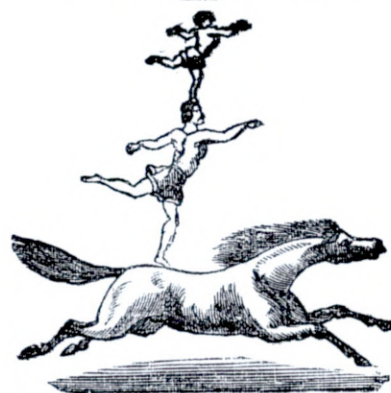
## MANCHESTER, Monday, August 31st, FAIR-GROUND!

Two Complete Performances, 2  
and 7.30 P. M.

G R A N D E S T Exhibition of Modern Times. A  
G Vulcan in Power and Strength. A Giant  
Among its Fellows!

## THE GREAT EASTERN Menagerie, Museum, Aviary, Circus, Roman Hippodrome

—AND—



## EGYPTIAN CARAVAN!

THIS COLOSSAL SHOW, the most Stupendous  
World's Fair ever attempted, depends upon its  
own intrinsic merit, and not upon extravagant  
newspaper advertisements, highly-colored picto-  
rial printing and delusive pledges. Every rider  
an artist, assisted by the cleverest Gymnasts,  
Acrobats, Voltiguers and Contortionists in the  
world.

Two Elaborate Menageries, Full and  
Complete.

Double Museum and a Dual Circus Troupe.  
JAMES ROBINSON and his Sons,  
CLARENCE and EUGENE.

George DeHaven's Great  
Eastern Circus opposed W. W.  
Cole in Kansas in 1874.

betting \$5 and \$10 on a gambler's  
meanest game--three card monte."

Advertisements appearing in the Topeka papers for the 1874 appearance of the Cole show claimed, erroneously, "First visit to the State of Kansas." The number of cars used in 1874 is not given, but the number of performers, by show claims, increased from 50 to 100. The parade of 1874 was quite similar to that of the year before.



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A unique little show played Topeka, May 13 and 14, 1875--Bartholomew's Exhibition of Trained Wild Animals from the Plains and Rocky Mountains.

J. J. Showles was in Topeka, May 11, billing the town and making arrangements for the show that was coming from a three week stand in Denver where George Bartholomew received the highest praise for his nearly miraculous training of his performing horses.

The tiny show made a parade on the 13th. The *Topeka Daily Blade* mentioned, "The horses were all handsome, spirited looking ones, and most of them were loose, without bridle or hindrance of any kind."

The first performance Thursday evening drew a crowd of between 400 and 500 to the tent pitched on Kansas Avenue at Crane Street across the road from city park. A matinee was given on Friday, followed by an evening performance. Adults, 50 cents; children, 25 cents.

The *Blade* on the 14th ran a review of the show: "The first feature about this collection of animal students is that they each know their names, and most of them each others names. The horses are named Nettle, Denver, Adelina, Nelloquich, Bravo, Bonita, Cupid, La Flore, Kitty Clover and Piccaninni, and will respond from the squad when called for.

"The name of the goats are Sebastian, Sinbad and Joe. That of the elk is Eclipse. The buffalo which performs is named Satanta.

"In addition to the animals, for the purpose of interlude, to afford respite for Mr. Bartholomew and his animals, his three children, Miss Manetta, aged 8 years; Master Georgie, aged 7; and Master Willie, aged 5, perform some choice circus acts, little Willie appearing as a clown.

"Mr. Bartholomew confines himself to no particular programme, but allows circumstances to suggest what to require of his animal pupils."

The *Commonwealth* reported, "The ponies are handsome and sleek, as well as intelligent. They performed tricks and feats with that skill and perfection that are never witnessed in a circus or menagerie ring. The military drill by the whole troupe of horses was simply wonderful. The horses all stand untied in a line outside the ring and go inside at

WILL EXHIBIT AT  
**Owego, Monday, Oct. 4th.**

The Golden Gate Open! Flood of Popular Favor!  
**HIGH TIDE OF SUCCESS!**  
**THE GREAT QUEEN IN THE ASCENDANCY!**

From Ocean to Ocean! One Continued Ovation! Wintered on the Pacific Coast! 10,000 Miles by Rail! Visited every City and Town in the Golden State! 86 Exhibitions in the City of San Francisco! A Million of People Witnessed It!!!

**SWEEPING AND ANNIHILATING OPPOSITION!**

**MONTGOMERY QUEEN'S**  
HIGH TONED AND MORAL  
**Caravan, Circus and Menagerie!**

THE GREAT REPRESENTATIVE SHOW OF CALIFORNIA.  
**No Catch-Penny Side-Shows following to Gull the Public.**  
Menagerie Teeming with Wonders of the Prolific Earth!

ONE LIVING GIRAFFE, and the only one ever successfully shipped to the Pacific Coast!

Pair of Giant Ostriches! Eleven Baby Lions!  
Mastodon Kangaroos! The Monster Ouadad!  
Red Maned Sea Lions! Pair of India Elephants!  
Hogspottamus from the Nile! and

**25 Cage Compartments of Wild Beasts & Birds!**

**EMIDY'S BRITISH CORNET BAND!**  
**\$10,000 RIDING OF THE GREAT MR. JAMES ROBINSON,**  
THE WORLD'S CHAMPION.  
**MISS MOLLIE BROWN,**  
Fifteen Years of Age, and the only Female Bareback Somersault Rider on the face of the Globe.  
Mr. Queen offers \$10,000 to the profession to produce her equal.

**MR. W. E. GORMAN,**  
THE GREAT BAREBACK JOCKEY HURDLE RIDER.

In 1875 the Montgomery Queen Circus toured extensively through Kansas.

the call of their names and faithfully execute the ring master's orders."

On the 15th the Commonwealth reported, "Mr. Bartholomew gave two exhibitions of his trained animals yesterday, and both were liberally attended. We believe that everybody who attended them were well pleased with the performances. He was satisfied with the patronage, encouragement and expressions of good will he received in Topeka. He has a splendid show and cannot help meeting with success with it wherever he goes. When he strikes the lovers of horseflesh in the East, he will be in clover."

In later years Bartholomew broke acts for many of the larger shows.

The season of 1875 must have been difficult for the small boy in Topeka, for following Bartholomew's exhibition, there was nothing more until October 11, when the season ended with Scott's Royal British Menagerie and Anglo-Franco Circus.

Before arriving in Topeka, Scott

played a few other Kansas towns. On October 6 Scott exhibited at Junction City. After the show had come and gone the *Union* reported that, "The great British-Anglo-Franco-Circus appeared Wednesday according to the bills. With the exception of one or two performances it was exceedingly flat, and yet it was a real relief. All sorts of amusements have been scared out of our region by the grasshoppers, but even this dilapidated fog end of something was hailed as a token that the scare was entirely over. . . . It appears that the institution is but the one-third of a big concern which busted at St. Paul some time during the summer. After the day performance the principal performer and his wife consulted one of our attorneys as the best way to obtain some \$800 due them. Attachments and

mortgages were discussed, but they were finally advised to wait until the audience for the evening gathered, and then to inform the boss that there would be no show until he came down. They succeeded. By actual count one thousand persons were present in the evening, and fully as many in the day time. It had been advertised less than a week."

E. F. Scott's show, said to be a fragment of Yankee Robinson's bankrupt aggregation, played Manhattan October 7. "The Rev. Mr. Wake," according to the *Manhattan Nationalist*, "requested members of his church who intended to patronize the circus this week to first withdraw from church." The *Nationalist*, October 15, commented that, "It was a very poor affair, and the attendance here was not large."

The Rev. Mr. Wake must have been pleased.

Like many another show Scott's inflated its importance beyond reasonable expectations. A handout in the *Topeka Blade* claimed, "It is the colossal show of the age. Nothing like it ever seen in the annals of amusement enterprise. It cost \$30,000 for its transportation from England and is the only Circus in



America introducing the double ring. It travels exclusively by its own conveyances, its requirements being greater than any railroad or steamboat in this country could give.

"We have five times as many Zoological wonders, five times as many artificial and natural curiosities, five times as many rare birds and beasts, five times as many men and horses, five times as many athletes, five times as many star equestrians, five times as many gymnasts, five times as many lady performers, five times the cost, five times the magnificence and splendor, five times the seating capacity possessed by any other traveling exhibition."

Scott's advance agent representing the ultimate circus, one five times greater than any other, appeared before the city council and requested that the license be reduced from \$100 to \$50, which the agent thought would be more appropriate for his little show. The council refused the request and the show pitched its tents outside the city limits and refused to pay any fee.

The day after the exhibition, the *Commonwealth* reported, "The One Million Dollar Challenge Show of the World was here yesterday. According to the bills it was brilliant, gorgeous and imposing--and the latter it certainly was. The wild beasts consisted of a black-billed goose, a Russian or Menonite antelope, a native American deer and two hungry bears, who showed a disposition to make a meal of each other. Not a tiger displayed the stars and stripes, and 'nary' monkey enlivened the proceedings with his squeal. The circus performance consisted of some rather lubberly trapeze performance, combined with tumbling. The horses were troubled with a cough which made their emaciated frames respond fore and aft. The Chinese juggler needed to take another course of study in China. The audience was full."

The *Blade* thought the horses were suffering with the epizootic and feared its spread among local horses.

Scott's played Burlingame October 13, but the only account published in the *Osage County Chronicle* reported, "Several parties were foolish enough to stake their money on a gambling trick at the circus, a few days ago, and of course lost it. Moral--never gamble."



**Little Molly Brown was one of the stars on the Montgomery Queen Circus in 1875.**

There were no reports of gambling or sharp practices in Topeka.

A "Giant Among Dwarfs" appeared in Atchison on July 17, 1875 with the arrival from California of Montgomery Queen's Caravan, Circus and Menagerie. The newspaper ads used by Queen were the same the show had used in California. "The great representative show of California" brought a strong equestrian exhibition to Kansas, including James Robinson and Charles W. Fish. Robinson was the finest rider of his time and Fish was not far behind. Also on the bill was Romeo Sebastian, "the Double Pirouette and Bare-back Rider." One of the outstanding features of the show was the daring and graceful riding of fifteen-year-old Mollie Brown, identified in the advertising as "the Pre-eminent Princess of Arenic Celebrities, the only recognized Female Somersault Rider on the face of the Globe." This "Grand Centralization of Genius! Monopoly of Equestrian Stars! Concentration of Merit! Avalanche of Attractions!" appeared in "Two Separate Rings!" Queen's "aggregated wonders of the prolific earth" included in his "Menagerie of Ferocious Wild Beasts"

the "Only Living Giraffe to be seen in California, the great Hippopotamus from the Nile, Tawny Lions of Africa, Asiatic Lioness and Three Baby Lions, Indescribable Wonders to be seen nowhere else on the Pacific Slope."

One of the "Indescribable Wonders" was the "Nondescript Quadad."

Magnanimously, Montgomery Queen declared, "Although I have augmented my forces, tripled my attractions, quadrupled my expenses, there will not be a raise in the price of admission, charging the same price as the ordinary little Shows charge. Admission, 50c. Children under 9 years, 25c."

In a handout run in the Atchison *Daily Champion*, July 7, the press department warned the reader that, "In the future this combination of performances will be classed among the Seven Wonders of the World. Once in a lifetime it is permitted to witness such a constant circle of attractions, and you may well say after you have seen this circus, hippodrome and menagerie, 'I have been to Saville; let me die!'"

There is no record of any one dying in Atchison, but in Leavenworth, on July 19 the prophesy was nearly fulfilled.

C. C. Pell, Queen's advance agent, called on the Leavenworth *Daily Commercial*, July 7, and contracted advertising for eleven days. It was small wonder that the paper described Pell as, "the right man in the right place."

The *Commercial* was pleased to announce on July 15 that, "there is one thing, thank goodness, Montgomery Queen hasn't got, and that's one of those aeolian arrangements called a callopie."

Temperatures on show day ranged from a low of 68 to an afternoon high of 85. The trouble came with the evening performance and was reported by the *Commercial*, July 20, under the headline, "PROBABLE MURDER." The text read, "During the circus performance last evening, and just as Mr. Robinson had entered the arena, one of the company came forward and requested that if a doctor was present that he would enter the dressing room. Dr. Neeley being close at hand, responded, and upon being conducted into the presence of the patient, found that Mr. Crow, a gentlemen employed by Mr. Queen as a



watchman, had been shot, and seriously, if not fatally wounded by a party unknown. The facts, as near as we could glean them from the injured man, were about as follows: A party of negroes, three or four in number, had been endeavoring to crawl under the canvas, and had been warned away by Mr. Crow. They resented his interference and made sundry threats, and as Mr. Crow departed, followed him, and as he stepped under the canvas, letting it fall behind him, one of the party fired, the ball taking effect in Mr. Crow's back just to the right of the spine, and ranging downward lodged in the region of the abdomen. As he complains of intense pain in the abdominal region, fears are entertained that he is seriously injured internally. The attempt was murderous and cowardly in the extreme, and the offender, if captured should receive the severest punishment of the law."

The incident called forth an editorial condemning hand guns.

Newspapers of the time always considered death to be imminent when a person was shot, and the prediction was often enough substantiated, but the circus affair had a happier ending.

"J. W. Crow, Montgomery Queen's watchman who was shot during the performance Monday evening, left for Kansas City yesterday," reported the *Commercial*, July 21. "His wound is not near so serious as was feared at the time of the shooting."

Also on the 21st, the paper reported an arrest in the case: "Officer Goddard arrested a colored man by the name of Edward Morton on suspicion of being the one who shot Crow, the circus watchman. At first Morton denied all knowledge of the shooting, but Goddard made him believe he knew all about it, when the prisoner acknowledged doing the shooting, and says the watchman struck him with a heavy wooden pin. After interviewing Morton's wife the officer found the pistol with which he did the shooting. If there is any one lesson

our colored people have yet to learn, and for that matter many of our whites, it is to quit carrying revolvers and razors."

Morton had a hearing on July 22, but the *Commercial* totally ignored the results. It is more than likely that the charges were dismissed due to the absence of the victim.

In a column adjacent to the story of Morton's arrest was a happier tale: "It seems that the members of our city government have been in the habit of

AT KEWANEE, ILL., FRIDAY, JUNE 9th.  
AN ENTIRELY NEW SHOW!  
THE CENTENNIAL YEAR FITLY CELEBRATED:  
FIRST GRAND TOUR OF AMERICA BY RAILROAD!

COOPER, BAILEY & CO.'S

GREAT INTERNATIONAL TEN ALLIED SHOWS IN ONE!



JAMES ROBINSON,  
THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH OF THAT NAME THAT "RIDES!"  
CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

He is the acknowledged Equestrian Monarch of both Hemispheres, and undisputed and without a doubt accomplished more than was ever before attempted by a mortal man.

MATCH US IF YOU CAN!

—WE HAVE—  
BETTER BARBACK RIDERS, BETTER FEMALE RIDERS, BETTER TUMBLERS, MORE HORSESHOE REPTILES, FINEER TRICK HORSES, BETTER EQUILIBRISTS, BETTER ATHLETES, MORE TROPICAL BIRDS, MORE SAURIAN MONSTERS, WHITE ANIMALS, BETTER PORTUGUESE, BETTER LEAPERS, FINEER TRICK MULES, MORE ELEPHANTS, MORE CURIOSITIES.

THAN ANY OTHER EXHIBITION NOW TRAVELING!

The big Cooper & Bailey Circus played Kansas in 1876. Circus World Museum Collection.

asking for free tickets to circuses and other shows, and receiving them, too, until they have come to regard the gift of complimentary as a kind of right. On Monday Montgomery Queen was besieged by requests for tickets to his circus on this behalf, and we are told the thing was persisted in until he became disgusted, and said he had paid his license, all that the city required of him, and was under obligations to no one, and would not give a single ticket to city officers."

From Leavenworth, the show moved to Kansas City.

1876

Cooper, Bailey & Co's Great Interna-

tional 10 Allied Shows, claiming 43 show-owned railroad cars opened the season for Topeka on May 11. The Great International exhibited in the following Kansas towns: May 1, Oswega; May 2 Osage Mission; May 3, Burlington; May 4, Emporia; May 5, Newton; May 6, Wichita; May 8, Junction City; May 9, Salina; May 10, Manhattan; May 11, Topeka; May 12, Lawrence; May 13, Leavenworth; May 15, Atchison. Advertising heavily promoted the menagerie which from all accounts was, indeed, impressive, including five elephants (Khedive, Titania, Prince, Betsy, Little Topsy), a giraffe, baby camels, ostriches, seas lions, rhinoceros, "performing den of Crocodiles, Zebras Driven in Harness," Horned Horses, White Polar Bears, an African Eland, baby Lions, 60 Shetland ponies, "Pair of Living Gorillas, Buffalos Driven in Harness, a Huge Saurian Monster," Bengal tigers and, "a Living River Horse!"

In a separate little section of the ad in the *Burlington Weekly Patriot* was a list of animals hard to identify today. "A White Tartarian Yack, a Rocky Mountain Moose, a Water Buffalo from India, Two-Humped Bactrian white sacred Camels, the Red Stag of India, the Cazembian Bless Box [sic], the Caffrarian Impoon, the Banyeti Spring Bok, the Barbary Aoudad and the only White Zebra ever captured."

"Bless Box" is a corruption of blesbok, the South African antelope with a large white spot on its face, but where was Cazembia? The Aoudad is the wild sheep of North Africa. Yack is a misspelling of yak. Caffraria is an area northeast of Cape Colony in Africa inhabited by Bantus. But what is a Caffrarian Impoon?

In Burlington 4,000 people bought 75 cent tickets.

Topekans were excited by the huge billboards the show erected. "The billboards on which are displayed the circus posters continue to draw large and admiring audiences," according to the *Commonwealth*. "It is believed there was not a minute between sunrise and sunset on Sunday last that some man, woman or child was not standing in front of the big board just south of the State printing office."

The star attraction was James Robinson who was "The matchless, peerless,



inimitable, and undisputed BAREBACK Equestrian of the world, engaged at the enormous salary of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS PER WEEK. The greatest horseman of any age or country, and whose name and fame are so familiar throughout civilization as household words, has consented to add eclat to the Great International Ten Allied Shows, the biggest and best of all exhibitions, by giving his inimitable equestrian creations with it during the current tenting season." Robinson was truly the greatest rider of his age and he added eclat to panache and aplomb.

During the Topeka engagement Mrs. Robinson left the show and returned to the Robinson farm near Mexico, Missouri.

At Topeka admission for adults was 75 cents, but on May 13, the *Blade* reported, "Several ministers went to see Cooper, Bailey and Co's circus and enjoyed themselves hugely. They were furnished complimentary passes, and of course were obliged to go. Tomorrow we can expect a discourse or two on the immorality of circuses and side shows."

Before the evening performance the band serenaded the Tefft House at Seventh street and Kansas avenue, Topeka's leading hotel.

The *Blade*, on show day, reported, "The parade took place at ten o'clock, and it was one of the grandest street pageants that was ever witnessed in this city. The superb band, leading, discoursed splendid music. The chariot was simply magnificent. The Arapahoe Indian brass band attracted considerable attention and admiration. The costumes were new and elegant and sparkled with dazzling effect. The route of the procession was down Kansas avenue to Fourth; along Fourth to Topeka avenue; up Topeka avenue to Tenth, along Tenth to the tent ground. (Lot at 10th and Monroe streets.) The performance this afternoon was the best ever given here, and the immense pavilion was packed to its utmost capacity."

The day after the exhibition, the *Blade* quoted a review of

**AT ROCKFORD, TUESDAY, JUNE 13.**

WAIT FOR THE BIG SHOW!

COOPER, BAILEY & CO.'S

## Great International Ten Allied Shows!

A Vulcan in power and strength.  
The Corso of Rome outdone.  
Nerve, Brain, and Capital!

An Exhibition replete with  
merits. Every nation on earth  
represented. Ten times larger  
and more grand than ever.  
The Entire World in Contribution!



The Biggest Show on Earth!  
Grand, Brilliant, Ovation!  
Great, Exciting, and Wonderful  
Union of Men, Animals, and  
Things. Everything NEW, GRAND,  
Beautiful, Fresh, Original and Brilliant.

A COLOSSAL COMBINATION OF ENRAPTURING ATTRACTIONS.

Immeasurably superior in excellence, magnitude, popularity and success. More than quadrupled in magnitude for the Centennial Year; deviating in attractions from the stereotyped and usual attractions, presenting in every department features heretofore introduced. NO ROMANCE, NO EXAGGERATION. EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS REPRESENTED.

AGGREGATED WONDERS OF THE PROLIFIC EARTH.

The Only Five Trained Elephants in America,  
Representing every species, driven in harness,  
THE LARGEST ELEPHANT (12 1-2 ft. high), and the SMALL-  
EST ELEPHANT (only 38 inches high) in the known World.  
The only living Giraffes in America, from 17 to 23 ft. high.  
The only team of 10 Dromedaries in harness.  
The only Show having a Genuine Steam Piano—all others are  
frauds.

50 Cages of Rare Wild Animals.



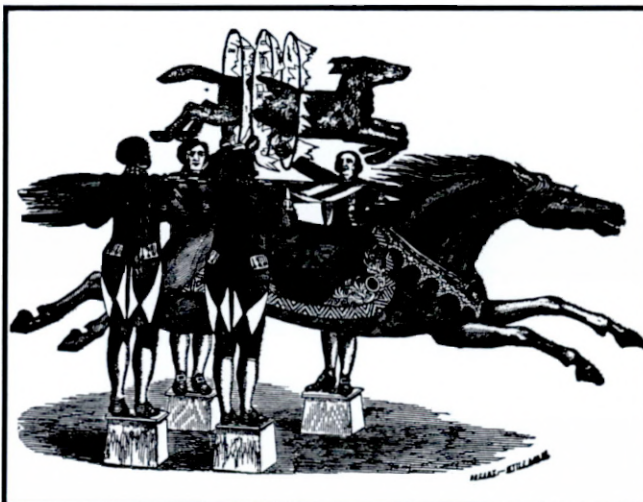
Stupendous Inter-Continental Amphitheatre.

Cooper and Bailey's 1876 newspaper ads included an illustration of a four giraffe hitch pulling an eagle tableau.

the show published by the *Wichita Eagle* which proclaimed, "Its agents lied, its bills lied, its managers lied—they all lied about their allied show."

"We are obliged to subscribe to the

A horseback riding dog was illustrated in an 1876 Cooper and Bailey newspaper ad.



foregoing," the *Blade* commented. "The concern exhibited here yesterday, and we are witness to the fact that it is a fraud equal to the Topeka Lottery. The show bills, the street parade and the costumes were in fact all that could be desired. The acts, however, amounted to a very common show. What little there was, was continually marred by the passing of peanuts, candy, lemonade, song books and tickets for side shows. The audience once secured inside the canvas, the drummers seemed to think it belonged to them for the purpose of fleecing. The show consists in the street parade."

The *Commonwealth* took a brighter view: "The exhibition given in Topeka yesterday by Cooper, Bailey & Co. was one of the very best ever given in this city, and the street parade was the best. The menagerie is large and contains five elephants, a herd of camels, a living giraffe, sea lions,

tigers, lions, leopards, an ostrich, monkey, parrots, etc. The ring performance was all that the bills claimed. James Robinson rides with all the grace, daring and agility for which he has ever been noted, and the feats of all the others were good. The wardrobe, trappings, vans, and chariots are all neat and even gorgeous. The tents were filled at both performances. It is in every respect a first class show."

Circus day was peaceful and pleasant. There were no arrests made and no drunks upon the streets. The only unpleasantness--except for the candy butchers--was an incident reported by the *Blade*: "A team attached to a buggy belonging to Jack Oliver of Silver Lake, took fright at the Calliope last evening and ran away, almost wrecking the buggy. There was a young man with two ladies in it at the time, but they got out when the thing turned over, but were not hurt much."

Topeka was not as easily shocked as Manhattan, or perhaps merely lacked the guidance of Manhattan's Rev. Mr. Wake who had forbid his flock to patronize Scott's Anglo-Franco



circus in 1875. Maybe Topeka just appreciated female form and beauty in the circus ring--as long as it was not Lady Godiva--and therefore could not approach the righteous indignation of the editor of the Manhattan *Nationalist* concerning Cooper, Bailey & Co's. Great International show, and the vulgarity displayed before mixed audiences at the Manhattan exhibitions of May 10.

"The female bareback rider," noted the *Nationalist*, "was much more nearly naked than there was any call for, and the get up of the other performer of that sex was simply disgusting. On the whole we cannot recommend this circus to decent people."

Topeka's second and last show of the year came on September 23. The long summer drouth of four and a half months was broken by a show well worth waiting for--Howes' Great London Circus, Hippodrome, Sanger's English Menagerie of Trained Animals and Mardi-Gras Carnival Combination.

Advertised claims should always be read with skepticism, but sometimes they provide the only clue to the size of the show. Howes claimed to move on 42 railroad cars--22 flat cars, 10 palace horse cars, 2 elephant palace cars, 4 box cars, 1 baggage car, 2 palace sleeping cars, and 1 palace passenger car. Even if the advertisement were discounted 25%, Howes would remain a good-sized circus.

In the Centennial Year of 1876, Howes announced "Every Day a 4th of July Celebration." At the top of the newspaper ads was proclaimed "1776. Centennial Carnival. 1876."

Most of the advertising space was occupied by challenges ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. The challenges were vague phrases that could not possibly be applied to any other show, such as,

#### "50,000 CHALLENGE

That Howes' Great London Circus, Etc., Special Features, as advertised and daily exhibited by the Company, are to be seen in no other concern in America.

#### 10,000 CHALLENGE

That

Howes' Great London Circus ( . . . ) Owns and daily exhibits the only GROUP OF SIX FIERCE AFRICAN HYENAS in the world. Trained and subdued by the Afri-

can Cannibal Montano, and are daily exhibited in the public streets accompanied by their keeper, in an open iron-clad den, during the Triuphal Street Pageant."

Other "5,000 challenges" included the Mardi-Gras spectacle, more imported elephants, Jerusalem donkey and Abyssinian asses in harness, harnessed zebras, Zoological Lecturer Professor Ellingham and M'le Dockrill, bareback rider.

"10,000 challenges" included Prof. Arstinstall's five performing elephants, Chieftan, Emperor, Mandie, Sultan and Victoria; four performing Bengal tigers directed by Herr Still; the only two baby Royal Bengal tigers; and the seven most splendid parade wagons in the

ern Bechuana, Africa, *Hippotragus niger*.

Complete routing in Kansas is not available to the writer, but the show is known to have played the following towns: May 3, Paola; May 4, Ottawa; July 16, Ft. Scott; September 18, Atchison; September 22, Lawrence; September 23, Topeka; September 25, Wichita; September 26, Emporia; September 27, Humboldt; September 28, Osage Mission; September 29, Oswego.

The night of May 5 experienced devastating wind storms and heavy rains. The flat lands along the rivers at Kansas City were flooded and the sides of hills came sliding down. One mud slide came between the two sections of the Howes' train and caused the loss of a day.

Howes' Great London advertised a strong performance: "See M'le Dockrill, the acknowledged Champion Female Principal Hurdle and Four-Horse Bareback Rider of the world.

"See Wm. H. Batchelor, the Champion Leaper and Double Somersaulter of the world, in his wonderful feat of leaping, and, at the same time, throwing a Double Somersault, or revolving twice in the air, over the backs of five elephants and two camels.

"See Frank Melville, the 'Young American Equestrian,' the beau ideal of grace, skill and daring intrepidity, upon his bareback horse in his new and sensational act of the Jerome Jockey.

"See James Melville, the great Australian Horseman, in his unparalleled Bareback Act, in which he will introduce his little son 'Alex', as the Morning Star.

"See the best five performing elephants in the world.

"See Masters Willie and Freddie, the Boy Wonders, in their incomparable act upon the flying trapeze.

"See Ben Maginley, the Gentleman, the Scholar, the Reader, the Clown.

"See M'le Jutau, the beautiful blonde Gymnast, in her terrific 'Leap for Life.'"

The *Commonwealth*, September 24, reported, "The street parade warmed the heart of the veteran circus goer. The

1776. GRAND JUBILEE AND MONSTER PIC-NIC. 1876.

## MAMMOTH RAILROAD EXCURSIONS!

RUNNING INTO CLINTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 12th, 1876.  
To Welcome the Monster Show of America.

A Scene of Gorgeous Splendor! Every Nation Upon Earth Represented.

THE LEVIATHAN COMING!  
Largest Show upon Earth--Hippodrome, Menagerie, Circus, Mardi-Gras, &c.

### HOWES' GREAT LONDON CIRCUS

SAVING'S ENGLISH MENAGERIE OF TRAINED ANIMALS, And Mardi-Gras Carnival Combination.

THE MOST UNUSUAL KERMESSE EVER SEEN

PERFORMING ELEPHANTS



THE HOWES' GREAT LONDON CIRCUS

#### The Howes Great London Circus's elephant act impressed Kansas reviewers in 1876

world--Triumphal Golden chariot of India, or Car of Juggernaut, The Chariot of Commerce, Car of Euterpe, Chariot of the Sun, Celestial Chariot, Legendary Dragon Chariot, and Cinderella.

The "5,000 challenge" that is most challenging, puzzling and mysterious is the "5,000 CHALLENGE that Howes' Great London Circus owns and daily exhibits the only Potoquaine in America." Potoquaine? The Potoquane (correct spelling), is a sable antelope of South-



show had all the old-fashioned features and some of the new ones, as 'opera seats' and programmes of the performance. The clown was not the 'old clown' of our boyhood, and knowing he was not, economized his mouth and was not tedious. The Dockrills, new people in these parts, did excellently. Madam Dockrill is a female James Robinson. The Melvilles are old timers and great favorites."

The *Commonwealth* reserved its highest praise for M'lle. Jutau: "In the matter of hanging by her heels she discounted any specimen of the tyrant man we have ever seen in the trapeze business. In the matter of jaw she proved the wonder of her sex. Hanging by her feet she sustained the entire weight of a stout man with her teeth."

The *Blade* offered a side light on the parade, reporting, "A farmer's wagon backed into a little carriage drawn by 3 pony mules and a zebra, and smashed the carriage all to pieces this morning. The mules were unscathed."

All newspaper ads were illustrated with a cut of the five elephants forming a pyramid. The *Topeka Weekly Leader*, September 30, carried a rave review that ended with the following: "One other thing we will speak of: that of the pyramid in the ring, formed by the five elephants. There they were, the one ascended a half dozen feet, two others raised half the distance from the ground, the four lapping the whole number with their trunks and surmounted the center elephant was Geo. Armstrong [Artinstall]. It was an exact delineation, as represented on the company's programmes. Fully twenty-five hundred people attended each exhibition, afternoon and evening."

The most disconcerting event of an otherwise splendid circus day occurred on the lot at Ninth and Monroe streets in the morning. Henry Mitchell and his wife and small child were seated in their buggy watching the tent go up when a small boy excited beyond caution, ran under the Mitchell horse. The horse jumped knocking the boy to the ground and the carriage passed over him. The horse turned down Ninth street toward the railroad tracks at a dead run. The carriage overturned but the passengers were not seriously injured. The buggy was

## AT CLINTON, Monday, May 29th.



### Dan Castello's Great Centennial Museum, MENAGERIE, Double Gigantic Circus

And Equestrian Aggregation!  
Every Nation of the Globe Represented!  
Wild Animals and Rare Birds

From all parts of the World! Special attention is directed to the  
MUSEUM OF ANCIENT AND MODERN CURIOSITIES,  
THE LIVING SEA LION, A VERY RARE ANIMAL, AND

#### THE DOUBLE CIRCUS TROUPE!

Consisting of 2 sets of Riders, 2 sets of Athletes, 2 sets of  
Gymnasts, 2 sets of Acrobats.

DAN CASTELLO THE MODERN MONSIEUR THE MARVELS OF THE WORLD, THE THREE  
REVEREND BROTHERS whose beautiful and classic Performances have been  
received with universal applause in Europe, creating the grandest furore wherever they have ap-  
peared in America, engaged at an enormous salary especially for their specialties, making abso-  
lutely the best show on the lot.

Dan Castello's Circus, a  
small show, appeared in Kan-  
sas in 1876.

completely destroyed. The boy was dan-  
gerously injured but recovered.

While Cooper, Bailey & Company  
and Howe's Great London were playing  
the large cities of Kansas and riding the  
rails in great style, a name strongly  
linked to the origin of the true railroad  
circus, Castello, was ironically trou-  
ping down the muddy roads of Kansas in  
1876 and astounding the natives of  
every little crossroads township with  
the wonders of the world.

Describing an exhibition on June 10,  
the *Wabaunsee County News*, Alma, re-  
ported, "Castello's circus drew a large  
crowd to town last Saturday, and we  
suppose that some thought they got  
their money's worth. The menagerie  
part was a humbug, but some of the  
performing was most excellent. The  
same feats not being better executed by  
any living man."

Castello played Perry, June 13, eight-  
een miles east of Topeka. On June 14,  
the show exhibited in Oskaloosa, ad-

vertised as Castello's Big Double Cir-  
cus, Zoological Aggregation, Museum,  
Aquarium and Grand Aviary, "ITSELF  
ITS ONLY PARALLEL." Court was ad-  
journing for circus day.

After the show was gone, the *Oska-  
loosa Independent*, June 17, was full of  
circus day gossip: "The sporting men  
along with Castello's Circus are report-  
ed to have cleaned out some Indians at  
Silver Lake [11 miles west of Topeka],  
and defrauded others elsewhere. Men of  
ordinary sense ought to know better  
than risk anything with such characters.  
The show is badly spoken of from plac-  
es where it has been.

"Port Baker and Dud Zimmerman hired  
to the circus company and followed the  
outfit off. We think it will be 'quick re-  
turns and small profits.'

"Don't question Mr. Charlie Johnson  
about his coat buttoned so closely.  
When the thieves swept his clothes  
line, on show night, they took his  
shirts along."

The Oskaloosa paper carried a report  
on circus day in Perry on June 13:  
"Perry Items. The rain on Tuesday made  
it a disagreeable day for the show; it  
rained and ceased awhile and then rained  
again. Very few people came from the  
country, and all together it was consid-  
erable of a failure."

Castello played Valley Falls June 15.  
The weather continued rainy and when  
the show moved on to Holton, June 16,  
the menagerie of the aggregation, due  
to muddy roads, remained an extra day  
in Valley Falls.

The show played Troy on June 19,  
and the *Weekly Kansas Chief* expressed  
its displeasure the following Thursday:  
"The Circus brought the usual number of  
fights with it. One dumpy little pill en-  
countered some one in the vicinity of  
Syracuse, on his way to town, and came  
out of the melee with his head looking  
as if he had placed it on a railroad track  
to stop a freight train. A crowd got into  
a fight in town, chawed each other up  
badly, and were taken before the Police  
Judge and fined heavily. As they did not  
have the money to pay their fines, they  
were socked in jail, and the Police  
Judge goes without coffee for breakfast.  
The camp-followers were like a lot of  
strange dogs, picking a quarrel with  
everything they met." Other Kansas  
towns played were: June 5, Solomon







# Fred Ledgett and Irene Montgomery

BY JOHN DANIEL DRAPER

The careers of Fred Ledgett and his wives, Dallie Jullian and Irene Montgomery, are good examples of how the work of outstanding performers is inter-related. Fred Ledgett's career can be divided into three parts--from his debut in 1890 until his marriage to Dallie Julian in 1902, during the period from 1903 until 1917 when their careers were almost inseparable and the period beginning in 1918 through 1938 which was after his separation from Dallie Julian and included his years with his second wife, Irene Montgomery.

Dallie's career of some 14 years as Mrs. Fred Ledgett has been covered in a biographical account included in a comprehensive article on Linda Jeal, Dallie's aunt and foster mother, in the May-June 1987 *Bandwagon*.

Irene Montgomery's career falls into two sections, before and after her marriage to Fred Ledgett.

Fred Ledgett, who was to become a true aristocrat of the big top, was born on November 28, 1877. While he was still in his twelfth year Master Freddie debuted on W. B. Reynolds Circus in 1890 as a jockey rider in the hippodrome races. By 1892 with the same show, he had graduated to principal bareback somersault rider and to riding double ponies Roman style over hurdles. He continued these same acts on W. B. Reynolds also in 1893 and 1894 and through that year was referred to as "Master," probably indicating that he was still in a period of apprenticeship.<sup>1</sup>

Fred was a ringmaster on John Robinson & Franklin Bros. Enormous Shows

Combined in 1896 and 1897. There is one reference from Sturtevant that indicates that he may have also been on J. H. LaPearl's Circus for part of 1896.<sup>2</sup>

William Melrose and Fred Ledgett were somersault riders on Great Wallace in 1899 and 1900. At least in 1899, Ledgett drove chestnut sorrels in a four

unique simultaneous four man jump-up onto the back of a running horse. Sam Bennett and Fred also did a fast combination riding act on three horses. An Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. lithograph for that year pictured three principal bareback riders--Fred Ledgett, A. M. Davenport and Oscar Lowande.

In 1902 Fred, again with Sam Bennett, rode three horses simultaneously and also did a double jockey act. In addition he performed as a rough rider who made daring pick-ups and rode hanging head downward from the saddle. Fred's courtship of Dallie Julian not only required his winning of her heart but also that of Linda Jeal and the ringmaster on Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. He waged his campaign during the summer of 1902 and by fall everyone was in favor

of the marriage and graciously gave the young couple their blessings. The wedding took place at Havana, Illinois on September 7, 1902. They went on Ringling Bros. in 1903 where Fred rode with John Rooney in one of three double jockey acts while Dallie was developing her precision and confidence as a bareback somersault rider. Their salary from April until November of 1903 was about \$1500.<sup>5</sup>

In the late fall of 1903 the Ledgetts went to Cuba with the Linda Jeal Circus where they remained until the opening of Barnum & Bailey where they appeared through 1907. For the first two of these years they did their individual specialties. Fred rode principal bareback, jockey riding and Roman style while Dallie did a bareback somersault act and jockey riding. In the winter of 1904-1905 they did riding acts on Shipp's Indoor Circus.<sup>6</sup>



**Fred Ledgett, standing on horse, posed with a group of performers on Barnum & Bailey in 1907. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise noted.**

horse Roman chariot race where his identifying color was green.<sup>3</sup>

Fred Ledgett and Dallie Julian were on Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. in both 1901 and 1902.<sup>4</sup> They were to continue to perform on the same program with various circuses each season through 1917. However, they apparently did not perform together in the same act until 1906 on Barnum & Bailey. Before that time Dallie did her graceful principal somersault act while Fred did a principal bareback act as well as jockey and hurdle riding.

In 1901 Ledgett, Sam Bennett, Oscar Lowande and A. M. Davenport made a



Beginning in 1906 Dallie Julian and Fred Ledgett presented their famous carriage and bareback acts. A novelty presentation which ran for about seven minutes, it was one of the first of its type, later copied by other famous riding families. The Ledgetts would enter seated in a carriage drawn by two ring horses. They then leaped forward on to the backs of the animals and after executing some stunts there, they leaped back into the carriage. The horses were then unhitched and the riders went into their double jockey riding act. Featured were leaps from the ground to the backs of the horses. This act was also performed in 1907 as well as at the New York Hippodrome in 1908. In addition, Fred did his whirlwind Roman race riding and Dallie did her somersault riding act.<sup>7</sup>

For the year 1909 they were on Hagenbeck-Wallace doing their "In the Park" double riding event and the next year they appeared on Sells-Floto with their individual specialties, he with fancy driving and racing and she with her bareback act. In 1911 their daughter Anna was born.<sup>8</sup>

Fred continued on Sig Sautelle in 1913 after Dallie closed there in August. That winter on Frank Spellman Indoor Circus at Buffalo, New York they did their beautiful two horse carrying act and Fred served as equestrian director. That show, which carried a troupe of 24 bears among other animals, travelled on a train strikingly painted in royal blue. The Ledgetts appeared on this show again a year later.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1914 and extending through 1918, Fred Ledgett was on Hagenbeck-Wallace and Dallie was there through 1917. Most of this time they still performed their two horse carrying act as well as their individual principal riding acts. In 1917 Fred, Dallie and Hettie McCree presented one of the most skillful and best dressed riding acts under the white tops. Rosa Rosalind, one of the big features on Sells-Floto in 1916, had joined Hagenbeck-Wallace in mid-season of 1917.<sup>10</sup>

By 1918 Fred and Dallie's marriage had dissolved. He was in the tragic Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus train wreck near Gary, Indiana in the spring of that year and received injuries that caused him to abandon his bareback riding career. From then on he specialized in serving as equestrian director and later as a trainer and presenter of liberty horses. From 1919 through 1922 he was on John Robinson's Circus and from 1923 through 1932 on Sells-Floto. In addition, in the winter of 1919 he had his own show and in 1920 on John Robinson's Circus he was assisted by John Smith. In 1922 he presented a liberty horse act. In the winter of 1923-1924 he was equestrian director of Nazir Grotto Circus and director of the Knights of Malta Indoor Circus at Pittsburgh. In 1927 he was on the Detroit Shrine Circus and in that season on Sells-Floto he presented a twelve white Arabian horse

ered by those in the profession as one of the most versatile, clever and best dressed circus celebrities in America. She had more than fifty costumes which she carried on the show. She had designed and made them all herself. In manner and appearance she was very pleasant and personable. The time went fast in the presence of "Miss Irene" as she was affectionately called by her show folk colleagues. Born in 1893, she began her circus career in 1901 and was to spend 38 of her 46 years in the circus.<sup>12</sup>

For the regular seasons of 1911 through 1919, 1923 through 1929 and 1931 and 1932 she was on the Sells-Floto Circus. She was with John Robinson's Circus in 1920 and 1921. In 1922, the year of her marriage to Ledgett, she played the Sells-Floto date in Chicago and then went on John Robinson's. In addition, during the off season



**Fred Ledgett with the Sells-Floto white horse liberty act in the Peru winter quarters in 1929.**

liberty act. By 1929 he had become a full fledged Shriner at Rockford, Illinois. In 1932 on Sells-Floto he again presented liberty horses and, as equestrian director, he gave the bride away at the wedding of Ericka Sarin and Justino Loyal.<sup>11</sup>

At this point it might be appropriate to pause and consider the career of Irene Hall Montgomery whom Fred married on March 18, 1922. She was a famous aerialist as well as a principal and manege rider, animal trainer and general performer. At one time she was consid-

of 1912 she was on Rhoda Royal's Circus. During the regular season on Sells-Floto in 1913 she was doing a posing horse act and rode one of Rhoda Royal's nine high school horses. She also performed on the swinging ladder. In addition, in 1914 she presented a four horse liberty act with Fred Collier. Two years later she was also a principal rider besides riding one of the black manege horses. She and Aldine Potter did an Indian riding number assisted by six Sioux in native dances. She also did aerial ladders. In 1917 she again was riding principal and doing manege as well as swinging ladder.<sup>13</sup>

The next year Irene was on Coop & Lent as well as on Sells-Floto. With the former show she appeared as a principal





**Fred Ledgett with Trilby on Sells-Floto in 1930.**

rider together with Dallie Julian. She also performed with Frank Miller on Rhoda Royal's horses as well as with an elephant act, which featured new and original tricks and ludicrous imitations of the latest dances. On Sells-Floto she presented an elephant number as well as a ladder act. In the fall of 1918 she was featured on John Agee and Oscar Lowande's Liberty Loan Circus doing a swinging ladder act four stories high.<sup>14</sup>

In 1919 on Sells-Floto she worked elephants with Grace Elder and Voncile Evans. Late in the season, in doing her aerial act, she was burned severely while on the swinging ladder. She came too close to the gas lights then used, her costume ignited and her arm came in contact with the hot mantle holder. During the winter of 1919-1920 she was in vaudeville.<sup>15</sup>

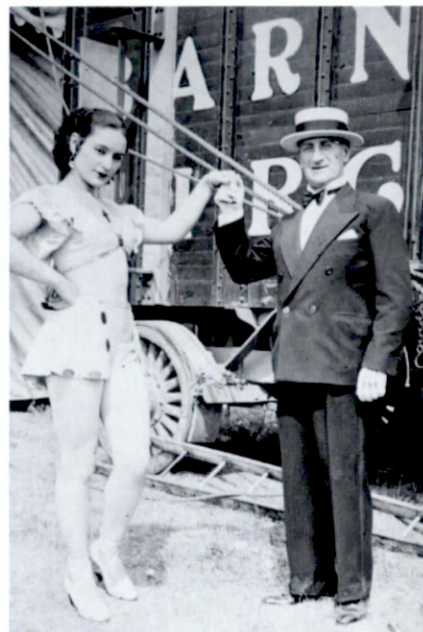
John Robinson's Circus claimed Irene Montgomery's services in 1920. She did a principal riding act and, with Joe Hodgini and wife, performed in a comedy riding act. She also presented a feature manege act during which at Columbus, Ohio, on April 30th, she was thrown and suffered a dislocated elbow. That year she was also doing a ladder act.<sup>16</sup>

By 1921 on John Robinson's Circus she was really beginning to show her versatility. She appeared in a comedy

riding act that also included Bernie and Herman Griggs and Elizabeth Rooney. She did a superb principal act, was a clever performer and had a wonderful rapport with her audiences. She also worked in the big elephant act with Harry Mooney. In an Indian riding act she displayed artistic, daring and inspiring horsemanship. In addition to all of this, she also did her aerial ladder act.<sup>17</sup>

Irene opened with Sells-Floto at Chicago in 1922 and then transferred to John Robinson's Circus. At the very beginning of the season, while still in winter quarters, she married Fred Ledgett at Peru, Indiana on March 18th. That year she rode high school, worked elephants, did aerial trapeze work and performed on the swinging ladder. From this time forward, Irene's career would parallel that of Fred Ledgett and she would be known professionally as Irene Ledgett.<sup>18</sup>

In 1923, in addition to presenting elephants and doing ladders in the regular season of Sells-Floto, in December she performed an aerial number on the Knights of Malta Indoor Circus at Pittsburgh. In general for the years 1924 through 1929 and 1931 and 1932 on Sells-Floto she gave her general range of acts which included working elephants, manege, aerial ladders and trapeze. She was not on the road in the regular season of 1930, although her husband was equestrian director of Sells-Floto in that year. She did appear in the Minneapolis and St. Paul Shrine Shows. In 1925 she shared in the three ring elephant act with Madge Fuller and Della Reed. The next year her manege act was on "Buster" doing the "Florida Lowdown." In 1927 she again rode "Buster," doing the "Black Bottom" and dancing to "If You Can't Tell the World She's A Good Little Girl, Just Say Nothing At All." The following year Irene was proclaimed to be the bravest woman in the world "in an amazing control over the largest elephants that breathe." That

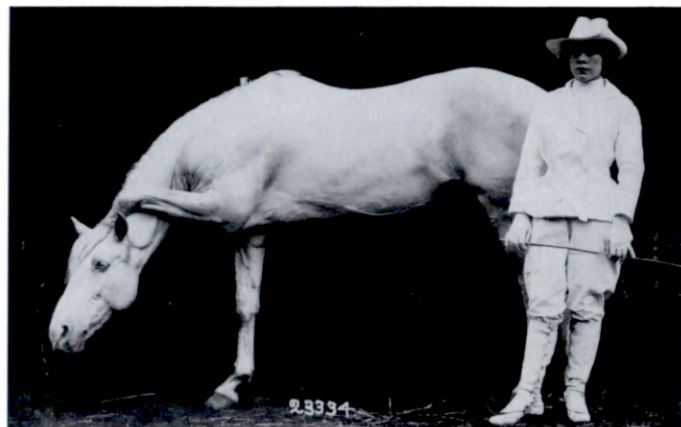


**Fred Ledgett and Chachita Cristiani on the Al G. Barnes show in 1936.**

year during the elephant number she took a nasty fall from the lead elephant in the long mount on the track. Fortunately there was no serious injury. She continued to display her versatility and had a smile that was seldom equaled. It was genuine and much more sincere than the frozen stage smile that is quite often encountered.<sup>19</sup>

In April of 1929 at Peru, Indiana she again had an accident with the elephants, falling and breaking her right ankle. By September she was back in the saddle on "Buster," riding in spec and doing equine dancing numbers.

**Irene Montgomery on Sells-Floto in 1913.**







**Irene Montgomery Ledgett in the back yard of Sells-Floto in the late 1920s. Circus World Museum Collection.**

There were no more elephant acts for her that season. It was no wonder that she sat out the regular Sells-Floto season for 1930 although she did visit the show when it was playing Chicago.<sup>20</sup>

In 1931 and 1932 she was back working elephants on Sells-Floto as well as doing high school riding. She appears to have omitted the aerial acts for these two years. In 1931 she also worked Cheerful Gardner's Hagenbeck-Wallace elephants at the Minneapolis and St. Paul Shrine Circuses. In 1932 for the Sells-Floto date in Chicago there were 30 performing elephants. They were divided into five groups, one of which was worked by Irene.<sup>21</sup>

With the closing of Sells-Floto, the Ledgetts began to appear elsewhere. In February of 1933 they were on the Toledo, Ohio Shrine Circus, Fred as equestrian director and Irene working elephants with Thelma Mann and Wanda Wentz. In 1934 Fred was on the Grand Rapids Shrine Show in January as equestrian director and also presented ten of the Sells-Floto liberty horses. He had a riding dog and pony act as well as a bucking mule. His next engagement was with the Detroit Shrine Circus where he drew acclaim as one of the early equestrian directors to use a microphone. Next came the St. Louis Police Circus in March. In February Irene appeared on the Cleveland Grot-

to Show and with the Detroit Shrine Circus.<sup>22</sup>

Russell Bros. Circus was a new show for the Ledgetts in 1935. Irene and Fred both rode manege. Fred was also equestrian director and Irene worked on the swinging ladders as well as a fast moving three elephant

act. Her beautiful manege horse was "Golden Nugget" on which she appeared in her striking costume.<sup>23</sup>

Al G. Barnes employed the Ledgetts in 1936. Irene was an elephant handler, rode high school and did a Shetland pony act. Fred was assistant equestrian-director and was the liberty horse trainer.<sup>24</sup>

They were back on Russell Bros. in 1937. He was equestrian director and she worked elephants, did a high school act and performed on the swinging ladder. In 1938 they were on Seils-Sterling where Fred was equestrian director and

**Irene Ledgett with the three elephants she presented on Sells-Floto in 1931.**



**Irene Ledgett on Al G. Barnes Circus in 1936.**

presented riding dogs and liberty horses. Irene worked elephants and rode a high school horse. At Chicago she joined Russell Bros. to do manege and present elephants. She worked the Bedini horse "Black Diamond" which had been ridden by Sir Victor in the famous Yankee Doodle number. Sir Victor was then in his fatal illness and would succumb on August 30th. On November 13th of the same year her husband Fred would also pass away due to cancer of the throat.<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note that over the years a type of family connection had been maintained as Fred Ledgett had made a number of visits to his old home in Rockford and in 1935 he and Irene had visited her parents at Sioux City, Iowa. They had not forgotten the roots from which they had sprung.

In spite of her loss, Irene was back on Russell Bros. Circus in 1939. Earlier that year she had been on the Zuhrah Minneapolis Shrine Circus as an equestrienne and swinging ladder performer. On Russell Bros. she worked liberty horses, did manege and presented an elephant act. Then tragedy struck on the summer tour in Virginia as she suffered a broken neck when she fell four feet from the door of her trailer and died at Danville on August 8th at the age of 46. The final touch of sorrow was re-



flected in two *Billboard* references stating that aid was sought to provide for a proper funeral in Iowa<sup>26</sup>

In a period of less than one year these two featured performers, still active in their professions with little thought of retirement, were taken from the scene and left only memories of the beautiful artistry they had presented.

#### Footnotes

1. *Billboard*, March 19, 1910, p. 54; *ibid.*, November 26, 1938, p. 40; W. B. Reynolds route book 1892-1893; *New York Clipper*, June 9, 1894. Unless otherwise noted all route books, programs and advertising materials are from the files of the Circus World Museum.
2. John Robinson program 1896; Sturtevant list, San Antonio Public Library.
3. Great Wallace route book 1899, 1900; *Clipper*, April 22, 1899.
4. Forepaugh-Sells program 1901, 1902; route book 1902; *Billboard*, January 19, 1901.
5. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1902, p. 4, 6; *ibid.*, April 18, 1903; Ringling Bros. route book 1903.
6. *Billboard*, December 26, 1903, p. 9; *ibid.*, October 29, 1904; *ibid.*, October 13, 1906, p. 28; *Show World*, August 10, 1907; Barnum and Bailey program, herald, route book 1904-1907.

7. *Clipper*, May 9, 1908, p. 313.
8. Hagenbeck-Wallace program 1909; *Billboard*, March 19, 1910; *ibid.*, May 28, 1910, p. 38; *ibid.*, April 15, 1911, p. 29.
9. *Ibid.* August 2, 1919; *ibid.*, March 21, 1914, p. 67; *ibid.*, November 27, 1915, p. 58; Frank Spellman program 1919.
10. Hagenbeck-Wallace route book, program 1914, 1915; *Billboard*, July 31, 1915; *ibid.*, April 1, 1916, p. 23; *ibid.*, April 28, 1917, p. 86; *ibid.*, June 16, 1917; *ibid.*, June 23, 1917, p. 27; *ibid.*, November 26, 1938, p. 40.
11. John Robinson route book 1919; program 1921; *Billboard*, May 10, 1919, p. 38; *ibid.*, May 1, 1920; *ibid.*, May 8, 1920; *ibid.*, May 7, 1921, p. 5; *ibid.*, May 7, 1932, p. 32; Sells-Floto programs 1923-1929, 1931, 1932; *White Tops*, April 1930, p. 1; *Billboard*, August 30, 1919; *ibid.*, December 1, 1923; *ibid.*, March 12, 1927, p. 65; *White Tops*, November 1932, p. 9.
12. She was the daughter of C. W. Hall of Sioux City, Iowa; *Billboard*, August 19, 1939, p. 30; *ibid.*, April 15, 1922, pp. 5, 106. 13. Sells-Floto programs, route books, various advertising materials 1912-1919, 1922-1929, 1931-1932; *Billboard*, June 16, 1917; John Robinson route book, herald 1922; *Clipper*, January 6, 1912, p. 11.
14. Coop & Lent herald 1918; Sells-Floto program 1918; *Billboard*, June 1, 1918, p. 3; *ibid.*, November 2, 1918, p. 26.
15. *Ibid.*, November 15, 1919, p. 58.
16. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1920, pp. 59, 86.
17. John Robinson route book, program 1921; *Billboard*, May 7, 1921, pp. 5, 13; *ibid.*, September 10, 1921, p. 65; *ibid.*, July 2, 1921, p. 64.
18. Sells-Floto program 1922; John Robinson route book, herald 1922; *Billboard*, April 15, 1922, pp. 5, 106.
19. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1923; Sells-Floto program 1928.
20. *Billboard*, April 6, 1929, p. 62; *ibid.*, September 28, 1929, p. 65; *White Tops*, May 1930.
21. *Billboard*, February 14, 1931; St. Paul Shrine Circus program 1931.
22. *White Tops*, March 1933; Toledo Shrine Circus program 1933; *Billboard*, January 20, 1934, p. 28; *ibid.*, February 3, 1934, p. 28; *ibid.*, February 10, 1934, p. 30; *ibid.*, February 24, 1934, p. 30; *ibid.*, March 10, 1934, p. 36; *ibid.*, March 24, 1934, p. 53.
23. Russell Bros. route book 1935; *Billboard*, February 9, 1935, p. 38; *ibid.*, March 16, 1935, p. 39; *ibid.*, December 28, 1935, p. 85; *ibid.*, May 11, 1935, p. 36; *ibid.*, December 21, 1935.
24. Al. G. Barnes program 1936; *Billboard*, April 11, 1936, pp. 44, 49.
25. Russell Bros. route book, newspaper ad, herald 1937; *Bandwagon*, September-October 1981; *Billboard*, June 11, 1938; *ibid.*, November 26, 1938, p. 40.
26. Minneapolis Shrine Circus program 1939; *Billboard*, May 6, 1939, p. 32; *ibid.*, May 13, 1939, p. 35; *Bandwagon*, September-October 1981; *Billboard*, August 19, 1939, p. 27; *ibid.*, August 26, 1939, p. 48; *ibid.* September 2, 1939, p. 30.

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# The New York Torchlight Parades of the Barnum & London Circus

By Fred Dahlinger, Jr.

This letterhead, dating from the early 1880s, left little doubt who the senior partner was in the firm of Barnum, Bailey and Hutchinson. Printed only in black, this stationary is ruled like a child's school tablet today, a feature of letterpaper before the typewriter came into common use. Pfening Archives.

Beginning in 1881, the New York engagement of the Barnum & London circus was heralded by a torchlight parade usually held the last Saturday night before opening day. In preparation for it, ads were placed in the Saturday morning papers to recruit a thousand men and boys to carry torches to illuminate the darkened parade route. Although the job applicants were often seedy and ragged, usually several times the required number turned up, allowing the managers to choose a corps from any one of several nationalities, according to one *New York Tribune* report. The recruits, who received fifty cents for their labor, were instructed both in the use and abuse of the torches, whose colors included red, green, blue and purple. Numerous white calcium and electric lights also lit the route. The flickering lights reflecting off glittering armor, gold leaf and mirrors, exotic animal growls and snarls and music from the steam organ, bells, jubilee singers, bands and a steam calliope created a surrealistic scene in the eyes of the crowds of New Yorkers that viewed the spectacles. There is little wonder why one reporter noted that the parade "affected the crowd in [a] strange manner."

In 1884 the parade units were marshalled at Madison Square Garden, where James A. Bailey, the "Napoleon of show business," stood amidst a confusion of men, animals and wagons calmly directing the preparations for a big operation. Partner James L. Hutchinson's whereabouts were not recorded but P. T. Barnum was holding forth in the first floor parlors of one of the big hotels on Broadway, usually the Metropolitan, where he entertained the large number of reporters and dignitaries that had been invited to view the parade with the famous man from Bridgeport. When the various parade features passed Barnum the reporters noted how the participants paid tribute to the show's namesake. Fortunately, not

too many of those present also witnessed the bands that gave up playing after leaving Broadway, the general exhausted condition of the paraders or the Santa Claus who spit tobacco juice at regular intervals. By the end of the evening the temporary help were using their torches for walking sticks.

The parade began with Bailey's approval, usually at 7:30 P.M., the lead unit normally not returning until about three hours later, having taken between twenty and forty-five minutes to pass any given point, depending on the year of the parade. The route varied from year to year. One year it was changed because a group of church representatives complained that the crowds had ruined the grassy lot in front of their cathedral. In 1889 it was revised to allow residents in the east side of the city to view it closer to their abodes and in another a fire forced a change of plans.

The telescoping tableaux ran into problems in New York just as they did in other cities due to the low hanging network of telephone and telegraph wires. On the Neptune tableau the corner riders had wire lifters suitably shaped like tridents. When the highest telescopers had to pass under structures supporting the elevated railway, the upper layers had to be lowered by their cumbersome mechanisms, causing a delay and gap in the march. At other times the big wagons were simply routed through back-streets and alleys to avoid the obstacles before retaking their position in the parade.

It was one of the biggest free shows to which New Yorkers were treated and they responded by lining the streets along the entire route. By one estimate, the crowd in 1887 numbered 200,000, the thickest crowds being present along Broadway. During all the years the event was staged only one mishap occurred, the runaway of a zebra hitch in 1890.



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